IV Building within an Existing Context

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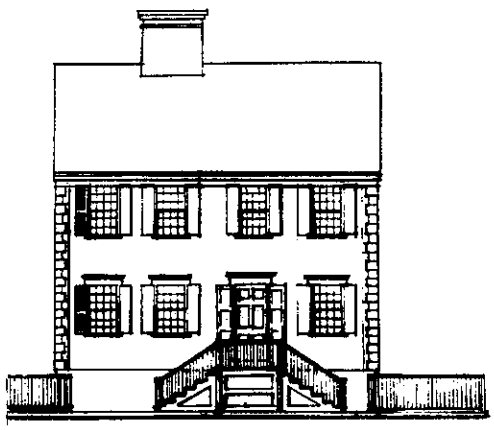
This section of the manual deals with the construction of new buildings or alterations or additions in an existing context of buildings. It concerns any context where the structures are sufficiently close to one another that the presence of each one has a bearing on the perception and meaning of the others. When these buildings share some sense of order, together they become a 'place', a synthesis of built objects and shaped space. The insertion of new construction into an established context or the alteration of an existing building can either strengthen or detract from the physical harmony and essence of that grouping. These guidelines apply to all kinds of buildings, commercial as well as residential, because many commercial buildings are

India Street—north side

No. 29 Benjamin Swift House



No. 27 Robert Folger House

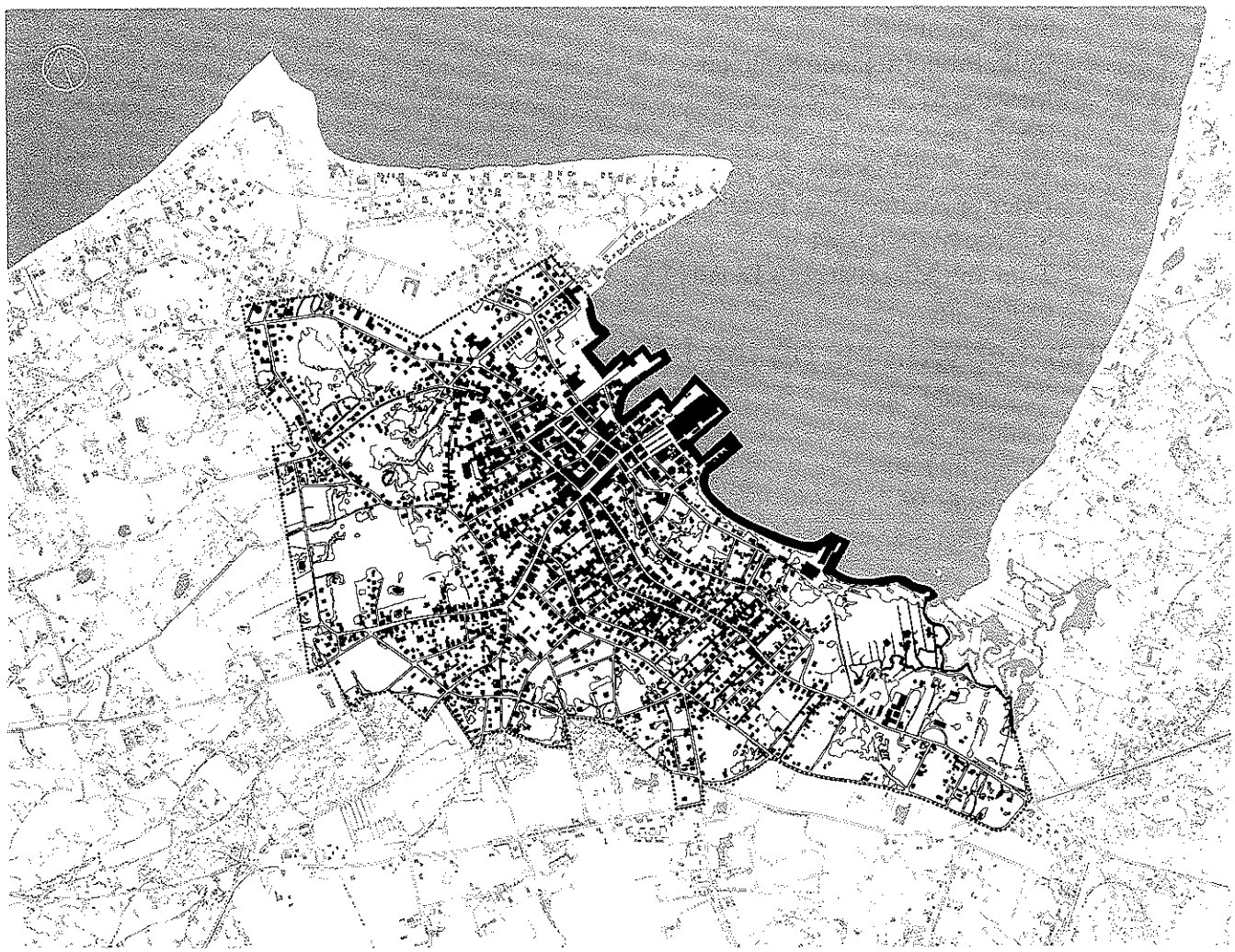


Figure 50. Town of Nantucket Core Historic District to which the guidelines apply.

India Street—north side—near Centre Street

No. 25 Daniel Coffin House

No. 23 Captain Reuben Baxter House

No. 21 John H. Swain House

similar in scale to residences. In fact, many former residences have been converted to business use.

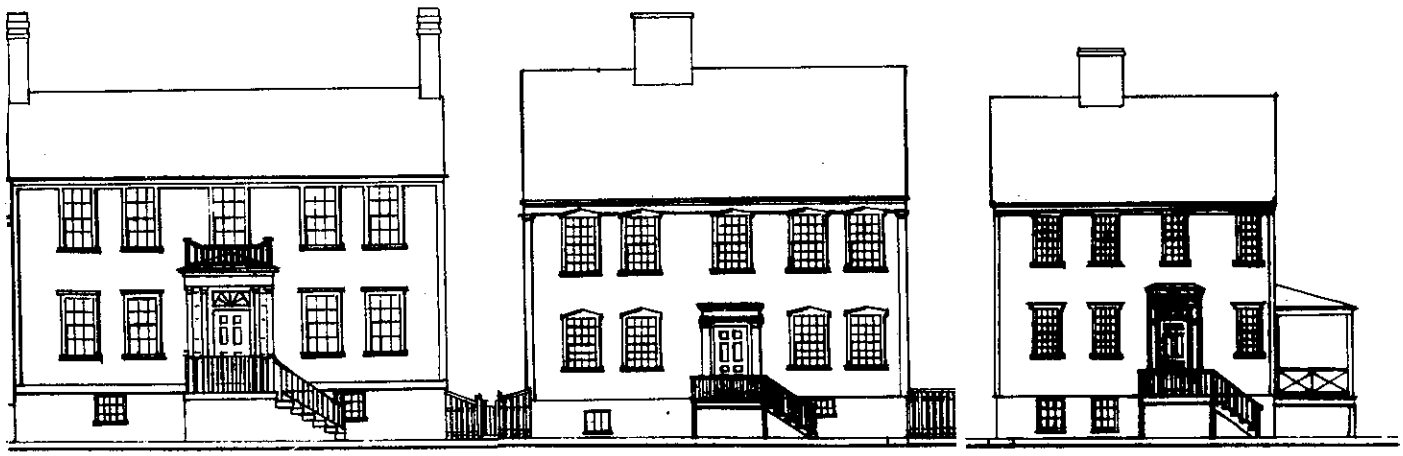
A building can fit into its context only if it embodies relatedness to surrounding structures. Relatedness means, simply, a similarity of a number of different architectural aspects among neighboring buildings. This similarity prevents visual conflict among building parts and identifies their unified concern for the quality of the whole.

The town of Nantucket, which is the heart of the island, and five other seaside settlements all possess their own individuality. Each has developed slowly over many years, thereby physically connecting the present with the past, and each is an integral part of the image and environment of Nantucket. Any changes in these settlements must respect their village and street context.

Guidelines for Building in the Historic Town of Nantucket

In no place is relatedness more important than in the town of Nantucket. Design guidelines for additions and alterations to old buildings and for new infill structures have been grouped into nine headings of design review: site planning; bulk, proportion and scale; massing; roof; windows and doorways; exterior architectural elements; surface materials; trim and other architectural details; and color. Within each subject category a discussion of the character of the town's buildings in relation to each of these architectural criteria provides rationale for the guidelines, which follow immediately in italics.

The Nantucket Historic District Commission has established these guidelines to assist those constructing or altering buildings; they are the criteria by which the Commission will determine the appropriateness of this new construction. (See Appendix B



No. 19 Zaccheus Hussey House

No. 17 Obediah Wood House

No. 15 Captain William Stubbs House

for administrative procedures and Commission review responsibilities.)

The guidelines for the historic town apply to all buildings as defined by the boundaries set by the Commission (fig. 50). Areas abutting the core Historic District are considered, inclusively, a buffer zone, and the Commission, therefore, will pay close attention to historic elements and integrity in these areas.

The guidelines in this manual are aids to responsible decision-making, *not* formulas, for building a new structure or altering an old one on Nantucket Island. To be effective, certain definitions within the guidelines will represent certain recognized values. Their use will dictate the amount of flexibility, if any, the Commission may use when a plan approval is sought. The following are the Commission's three categories of criteria, and some of the individual terms used within this book to determine them:

Rules and Regulations

•REQUIREMENTS
Design standards that must be followed in order to receive plan approval. In the text, the words "must", "shall", and "prohibited" signify requirements.

•RECOMMENDATIONS
Design elements that are encouraged by the Commission. In the text, the words "preferred", "important", "encouraged", "discouraged" "should" and "recommended" signify recommendations. A recommendation may be waived, but only if the applicant can satisfactorily demonstrate that in his/her particular case the recommendation is not appropriate for, or does not apply to, his/her project.

•CONSIDERATIONS
Design concerns dealing with broader contextual elements — things it is advisable to think about in connection with a project. There is no established vocabulary here, since considerations address broader issues. Compliance is voluntary; non-compliance is not grounds for the Commission to reject a plan.

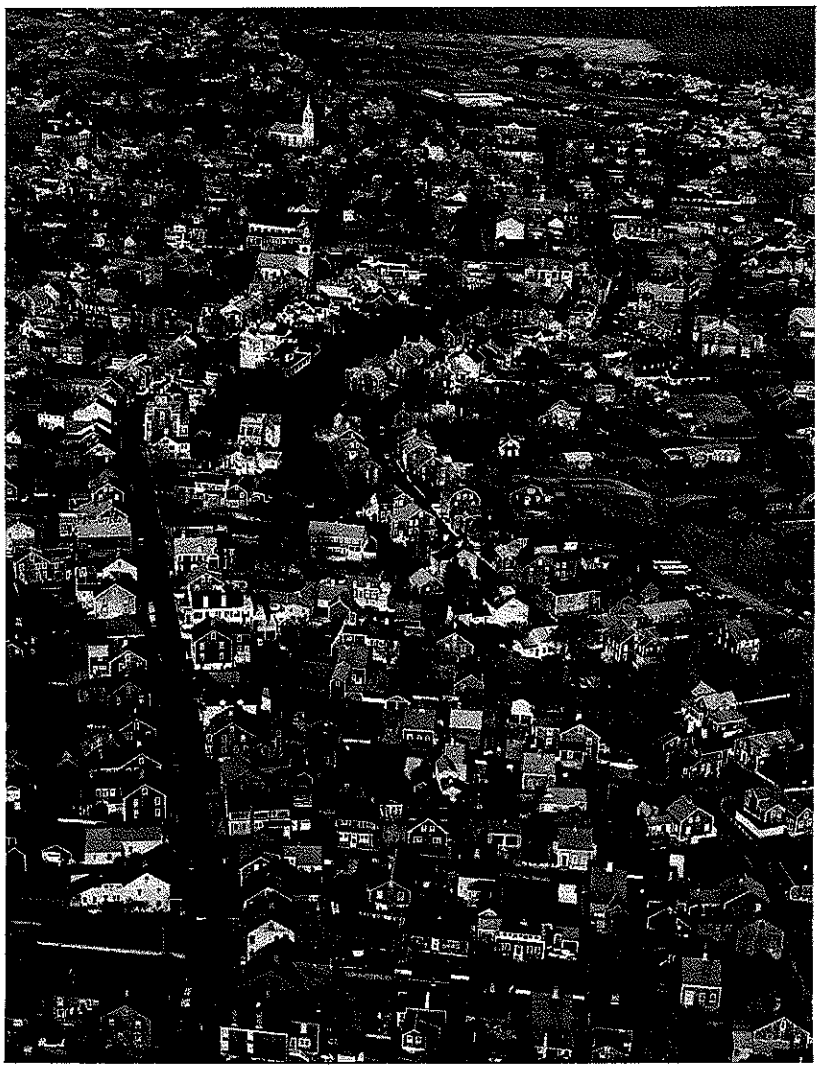


Figure 51. The town of Nantucket, looking west up Orange Street.

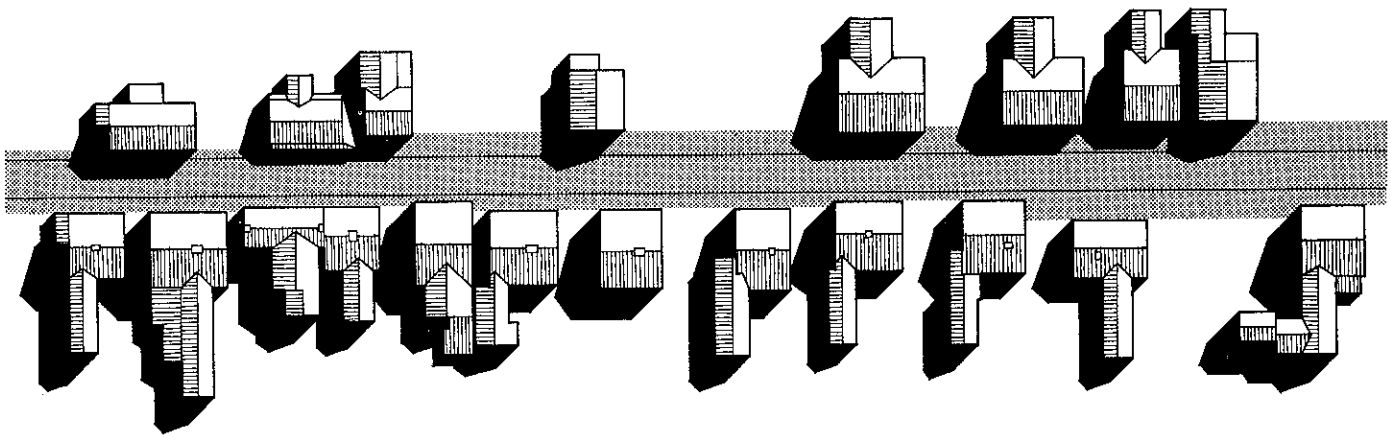


Figure 52. Single-plane facades face and align with the street.

Site Planning

Siting of the Building The first settlers on Nantucket built their houses facing south to catch the sun's warmth. After the town grew to a village pattern, most houses were placed along the street in adherence to English town tradition. Most buildings of the town have facades fronting the street and ordinary side elevations (fig. 51). The facade historically was a simple plane of the major mass of the building and contained the main entrance. Most facades were generally aligned, creating a wall along the street space and a rhythm of the house entrances along it (fig. 52). After the whaling era, houses diverged from the customary single-plane facade and consistent streetside building placement, thereby fragmenting the unified street edge. New houses then began to have front yards, large lots, a lack of consistency in setbacks from the property line, and orientations to the water or view rather than to the street.

Historic Siting Patterns

Any new construction should follow a pattern of site utilization similar to that already established adjacent to it. In particular, consideration should be given to the setback of the buildings from the street, the width of their facades and the spaces between them, especially because these factors contribute to the rhythm and continuity of the buildings as seen together. Where buildings are predominantly aligned along the street creating a unified edge or wall along the street space, the front of a new building should be aligned within the general facade line of its neighbors.

New Siting Complements Old Patterns

Garages *See expanded guidelines (pg. 105). In the historic town it is imperative to conceal or minimize the visual impact of garages. Placement of the garage to the rear of the lot is preferred. Garages should be plain in treatment or coordinated with the house style.*

Delineation of the Street Space Historically, the site planning of a house lot carefully differentiated between those areas that were *public*—the sidewalk and other spaces accessible to pedestrian passersby; *transitional or semi-public*—the steps and entranceway and certain other visible fenced-in areas in front of the building; and *private*—enclosed or screened areas (fig. 53). The siting of the house close to the street and to other houses, in conjunction with fences and hedges, established this delineation of accessibility and territory. This edge was usually closely

Public vs. Private

coordinated between adjacent properties, thereby creating a continuous demarcation of the public domain. Where there is a vacant lot or a building has been set back from the street, fences, hedges and trees have been effectively used to establish the important edge of the street space.

Hedges, Fences *The site planning of new lots is to follow the historic character of house lots in separation of public, semi-public and private areas. The creation of a continuous street edge through the use of hedges, fences, etc., is imperative. This edge should be coordinated with adjacent properties to give unity to the street.*

Landscape Plantings The historic form of the town did not include landscape plantings on house lots. There were very few trees in town until after the mid-1800s, giving Nantucket the rather austere appearance that may be seen in old photographs. Among the first trees planted in town were the elms placed along Main Street in 1851 by Henry Coffin. Subsequently, trees were added along other streets and to lots.

19th Century Landscape Patterns Houses built on large lots on the edge of town, e.g., Cliff Road and Hulbert Avenue, began a new town pattern of buildings isolated in their own landscaped space. From the 1870s, hedges and other similar plantings became important features throughout the townscape, including the narrow lots of the old settlement. The placement of shrubs adjacent to a house, called foundation plantings, was a later development of the bungalow houses built around 1900 and is not characteristic of Nantucket.

In general, the plantings in the town are characterized by a limited number of plant materials due to the climate and by landscaping in simple, straightforward designs. The use of shrubs and trees for architectural effect is of primary importance in the visual image of the town, and therefore is an essential consideration in the site planning of new buildings in the town or in any setting of town density.

Hedges Hedges are used (1) as barriers to separate publicly accessible areas from private house lots, (2) as walls or edges along the street or lot lines defining spaces, (3) as screens to block out visually unattractive use or to shield private activities, and (4) as design elements to lead the eye to a particular focus in a setting or view. In this way, the planting materials are placed to reinforce, or add to, the architectural effect of the buildings and the spaces between them.

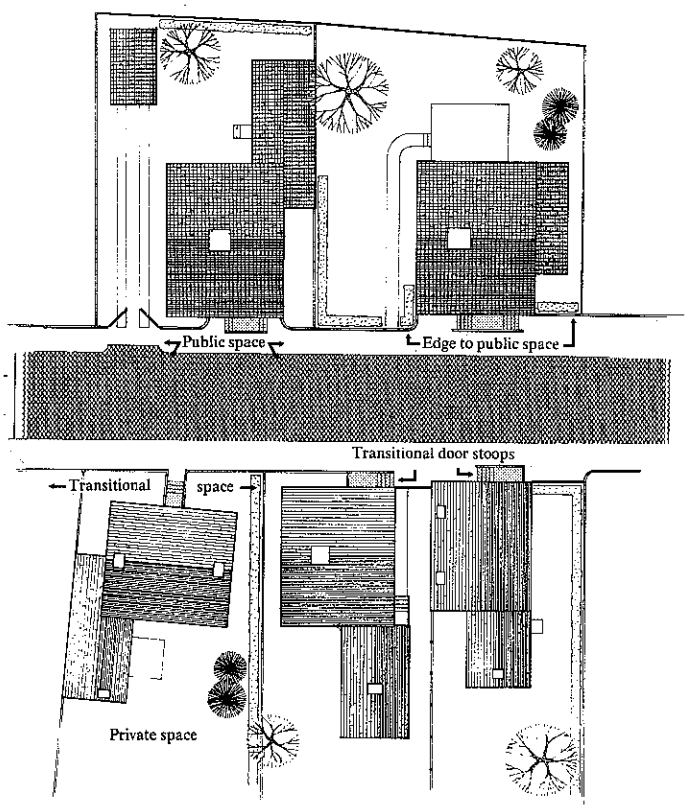


Figure 53. Differentiation of space.

While the Commission does not intend to review residential plantings, it strongly recommends that any new lot development use plant materials in the ways noted above because they contribute so much to the town's appearance. Hedges or other front plantings should be coordinated with adjacent lots as well as with the existing street edge. New landscaping should follow simple, restrained designs in keeping with the character of Nantucket. In the historic town, elaborate plantings have an inappropriate decorative effect, while simple gardens, elegantly rendered, lend organization to a house lot as well as color. The latter, while generally eye-pleasing, also serves to offset the monotony of the grey that otherwise is predominant on Nantucket streets. Window boxes planted with flowers create another delightful color accent.

Figure 54. A picket fence with quietly elegant detail, Main Street.

Fences These small linear elements are an essential part of the image of the town. Great care has gone into preserving this tradition and maintaining the fine craftsmanship of the past. The most elegant fences in the town are the products of ship's carpenters and were built for the stately homes of ship owners and captains (fig. 54). In between houses and along empty lots, fences were built linking house to house. Big houses on larger lots were graced by fences across their fronts. The combined effect on many streets

Figure 55. Fences create a continuous yet graceful demarcation of public and private spaces.

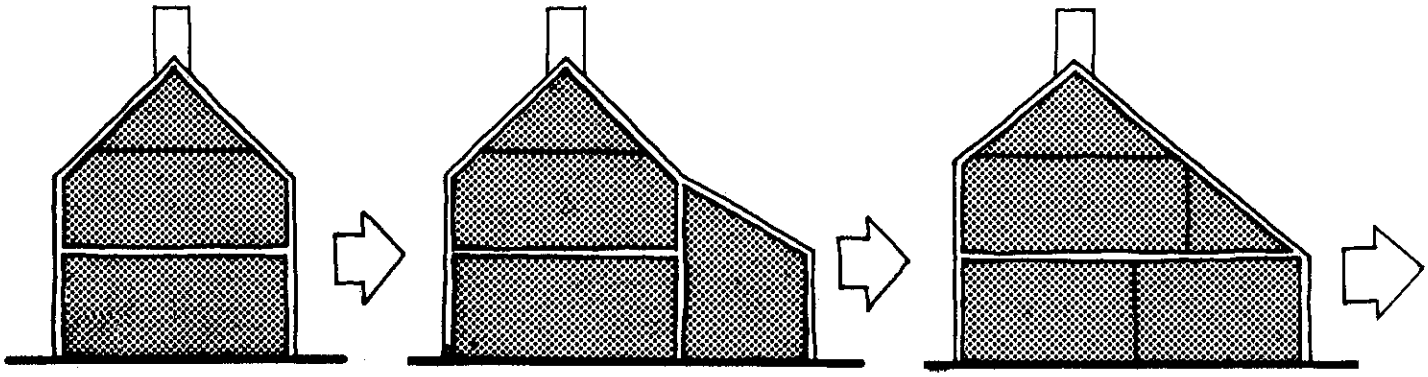
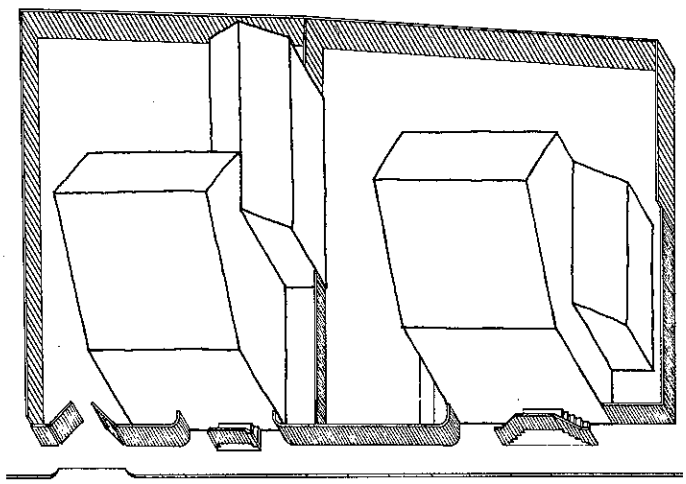


Figure 57. Evolution of building shapes.

was the creation of a continuous physical edge along the street, punctuated by door stoops or entrance walks (fig. 55). Where a house has a different orientation or setback from the street, the fence edge is particularly beneficial to connect it spatially to its neighbors and the street rather than to leave this relationship undefined.

The characteristic fence form of Nantucket, strongly influenced by ship design, is wooden with a top rail, whether of open members or solid with plank boards. The low horizontal line of the fences creates a pleasant visual contrast with the distinct masses of the buildings, especially when the fences are of small-scale wooden members in an open design.

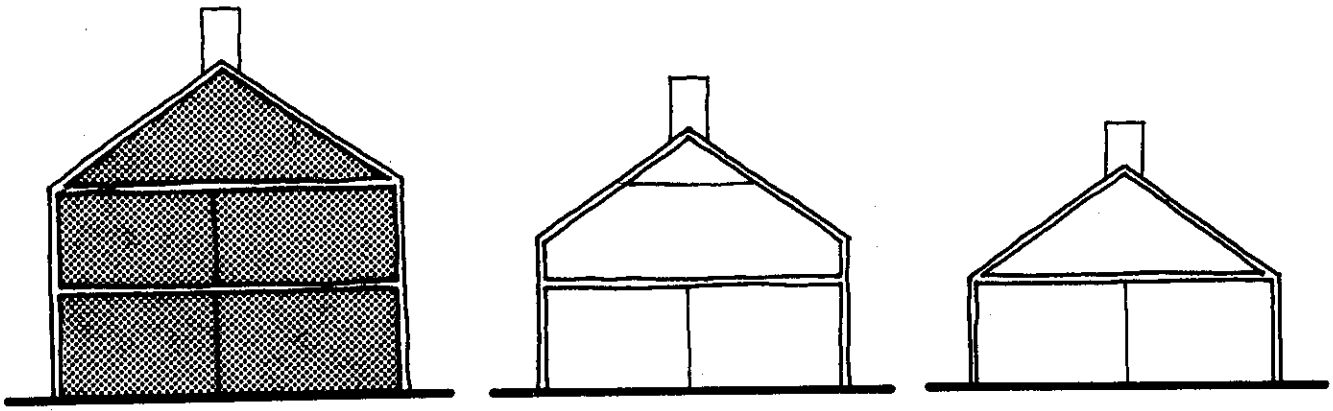


Along lot frontage.
Fences over 4 feet high or board fences not approved.

Figure 56. Fences are important in town and integral to the street edge.

Types of Fences

While there are many fence designs in the town, charming in their individuality, the town displays a few predominant fence types: (1) Picket fences have $2^1/_2$-inch face pickets spaced five inches on center; the pickets are capped by a molded rail or are pointed. The simple picket fence is associated with the lean-to or typical Nantucket Quaker houses. (2) Wood baluster fences with round balusters are often $1^1/_4$-inches in diameter with spaces five inches on center with a molded (or round) top rail. Baluster fences are associated with the emergence of more elegant houses appearing after 1800 and with later classical styles, although fences in the Greek Revival style originally did not include balusters, but were similar to the fence in front of the Atheneum. (3) Combination baluster panel fences with turned wood balusters are usually $1^1/_4$-inches in diameter with a molded top rail and a bottom section under them of solid wood panels. These fences are now associated with Classic Revival and other more refined buildings of the 19th century. (4) Horizontal board fences have 6- to 8-inch-wide horizontal rails with a similar board laid flat as a top rail. This plain fence is not used in front of dwellings. (5) Vertical board fences are the most simple of all: 6- to 8-inch wide boards spaced up to $^1/_2$-inch apart with straight cut ends or a molded top rail. This



unrefined fence should not be located in the front of a lot. (For scale drawing of these fence types, see Appendix D.)

Fences of other designs and more elaborate decoration were built as houses themselves became more decorative after the Quaker influence waned. For instance, wrought-iron fences are found with the town's few brick houses. In the late 1800s when American houses became concerned with Victorian ornamentation and old Nantucket houses were 'dressed up', even fancier fences were built by local carpenters.

Each lot in town should evaluate its participation in the creation of a unified physical edge along the street. In most cases, fence and/or hedge should be placed on a lot where no physical boundary exists between the private and the public domain. New fences erected in the town, or in a town-density extension of the town, should be coordinated with existing street fences, particularly in height and alignment along the street. All aforementioned traditional fences are appropriate in the town. Moreover, the design of any fence should be compatible with the style and period of the house it accompanies. The appropriateness of other fence designs will be considered by the Commission on their individual merits. (For other fence policies see fig. 56 and general guidelines pg. 104.)

Walkways, Driveways, Retaining Walls

Site Improvements Walkways in the old town should be of select common brick, rectangular bluestone, granite flagstone, pea gravel or crushed shell. Driveways, if not of stone, brick or shell, may be black-topped, with a covering of pea gravel or shell recommended. Retaining walls ought to be used only where necessary to mediate large grade changes or to create planting areas. It is preferred that they be kept inconspicuous and to the rear of the lot. In the old town, retaining walls should be faced with select common or water struck brick, or stone; exposed cement block or concrete walls are not appropriate nor is pressure-treated timber.

Height, Siting

Secondary Dwellings Nantucket's unusual zoning law allows, in theory, the construction of a secondary dwelling on virtually every lot on the island. Unrestricted secondary dwelling construction could undercut the aesthetic balance and harmony in existing streetscapes and traditional neighborhood patterns. The Commission, therefore, has established the following guidelines for size and siting of secondary dwellings in the interest of assimilation.

Secondary dwellings shall be limited to 1- or 1½ -stories in height with a maximum ridge elevation not to exceed 22 feet. They shall be subordinate in form and scale, and sympathetic in detail and fenestration to, the character of the principal dwelling. They shall be sited in such a way as to maintain clear views of the principal dwelling from the street or public way.

Bulk, Proportion and Scale

Height In general, much of the bulk of a historic house is not apparent from the front due to the attachment of additions or ells to the rear of its main mass. As a result, the height and width of the facade are the predominant dimensions of the buildings as seen from the street. More than two-thirds of the pre-Civil War houses of the town are two stories or more in height. The cornice of the typical Nantucket house is approximately 18 feet from the ground. The later Federal and Greek Revival houses frequently sit on high basements 3- to 5-feet above the ground, making them taller than their predecessors.

Variables

On a street of generally aligned facades, it is recommended that any new construction conform to the predominant height of the facades of the existing buildings on the street. In any case, no new construction should be more than 10 percent taller in either its facade or overall height than the tallest building on the block on which it is to be built.

Facade Proportions The proportions of a building facade are important because the front is the principal visible aspect of the building and is seen in conjunction with adjacent facades. As a result of the underlying consistency of certain building types through the town's history, many houses share very similar proportions. For instance, the typical Nantucket house has facade proportions of approximately 2:3 to 3:4, height to width.

Typical Ratios

The repetition of these visually restful proportions, combined with the standardized proportions of the windows, contributes greatly to the harmony of Nantucket facades and the unity of the street.

The proportions of the facade of a new building along a street should be compatible with the proportions of the existing buildings. As the distance separating buildings increases or as facade massing of existing buildings becomes more complex, this criterion becomes less crucial.

Scale In general, Nantucket buildings have a small scale easily correlated to the dimensions of the human body. Therefore, their scale is comfortably perceived by the passer-by. This was always the case with the unadorned 17th and 18th-century houses that had small-dimensioned surface materials, trim and window lights. In the 1700s windows were of standard sizes, 4- to 5-feet tall in rooms under eight feet high. In the 19th century, buildings were constructed in conscious styles and of larger scale. Their overall size, focal dimensions and ornament were more grand, reflecting increased wealth and external influences. Basements, door stoops, frontispieces, hallways, larger window lights, etc., contributed to the larger scale of buildings. Moreover, the advent of the Greek Revival style, with its large elements derived from the orders of stone temples, introduced a further enlargement of building scale in the town.

Typical Pedestrian Scale

The increase in scale of architecture was also experienced in the scale of

space in the town. Upper Main Street was made wider in keeping with the stature of its new mansions. After the fire of 1846, the commercial core of the town was reconstructed with wider streets and Lower Main Street was made into a large unified linear space, 600 feet by 90 feet.

Any new construction in the town should be of a scale compatible with that of adjacent buildings. Also the scale of spaces between buildings should be carefully considered.

Massing

Simple Volumes The shapes of Nantucket buildings evolved from their original medieval forms— two-story, one-room-deep English houses. They grew to include the added, and subsequently integral, lean-to, two rooms deep downstairs with a long rear roof slope, and later to the $2^1/_2$-story gable house with the addition of rear rooms to the second floor (fig. 57). The simple $2^1/_2$-story gable house is the predominant type in the town; the $1^1/_2$-story gable roof (Cape Cod) cottage, popular on the mainland, was rarely built in old Nantucket. Instead, modest houses were commonly $1^3/_4$-stories, with rooms in the garret.

In general, a Nantucket building is composed of complete volumes of rectangular plan and simple, pitched roofs. Occasionally, where special site conditions existed, such as a constrained lot shape, the building mass was slightly angled on a side or at an addition.

Additive Massing More complex massing was achieved traditionally by adjoining simple volume masses along their outer surfaces. This straightforward additive massing easily allowed incremental enlargement of buildings over time (fig. 58). The aggregate complexity of such a building maintained a sense of order because one mass was visually dominant with the smaller masses added to it. The main section of a house was a simple volume that directly fronted the street. The house was extended backward, and sometimes laterally, by the attachment of smaller volumes of related shape. The integrity of the facade plane was maintained while the rear of the structure often became an assemblage of similarly sloped roof masses.

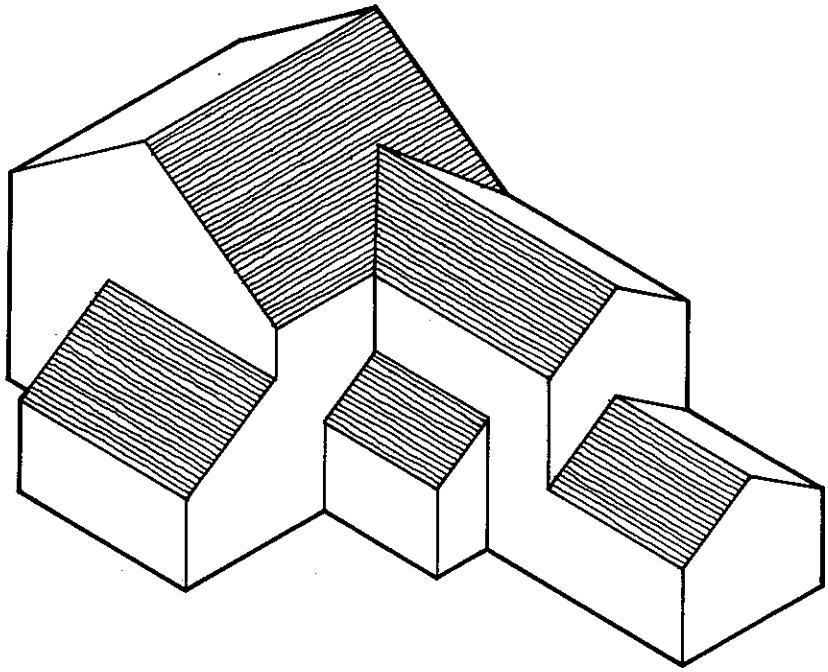


Figure 58. Additive massing: one mass dominant and others adjoined.

Almost all the old houses have had at least one addition built onto them. The most typical addition was the attachment of a kitchen or storage ell to the rear. When Nantucket became a summer resort, the old houses were enlarged and adapted by the new owners for new purposes and more space. Fortunately, most of these additions were to the rear of the house and were hidden. However, porches and sun parlors were added to the fronts of some old houses which detracted from their historic massing.

Additions

The massing of a new building in the town should employ the traditional form types seen in the town. All roofs on the masses should be sloped; flat-top masses are not permitted. A simple main mass should be placed on the street side of a building and be in harmony with the form and orientation of existing buildings along the street. Building masses with cantilevers or overhangs, indents, notches or warped surface planes are not traditional or appropriate for buildings in the old town.

The integrity of the front of a historic building should be maintained. Consequently, on pre-Civil War structures, adding bays or other massing interruptions to its plane is not permitted. Any addition to a historic house should be extended from the rear or side wall and kept as inconspicuous as possible. Such additions should harmonize with the massing, style and details of the original house. Further, their bulk should not overwhelm the original building size.

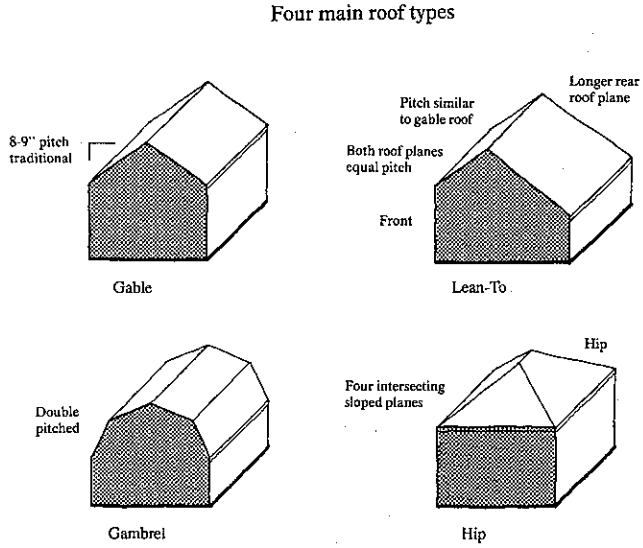


Figure 59. Four main roof types: gable, lean-to, gambrel and hip.

Roofs

Only four main roof types were known in the town until after the Civil War. Of the 800 structures still existing, 87 percent have gable roofs; 10 percent lean-tos; more than one percent gambrels and less than two percent hip roofs (fig. 59). Shed roofs were subsidiary and not used alone.

Traditional Roof Types (1) The typical gable roof comprises two planes, equal in size and pitch. They generally have a pitch of 9 inches (vertical) in 12 inches (horizontal distance). Greek Revival structures, however, have pitches as low as 6 in 12 inches in order to simulate Greek temples. (2)The lean-to is an evolved gable with the rear plane extended downward (fig. 60). This roof characteristically has the same pitch for both the front and rear planes. Lean-to roofs traditionally have the same 8- or 9-

Orange Street—east side—near Main Street

No. 18 Mathew Beard House | No. 20 John Beard House (Luciend Mooers House) | No. 22 Nathaniel Woodbury House

inch pitch of the simple gables. (3) The gambrel roof is an adaptation of the gable roof that is double-pitched on both sides to allow greater use of the space under the roof. Although their pitches may be varied, gambrel roofs on Nantucket should follow traditional pitches and proportions. A typical gambrel has a pitch of approximately 20 in 12 inches for the lower roof plane and 5 in 12 inches for the upper one. A good example of a gambrel is the restored house at 37 Orange Street. These three roof types are similar in that each has a horizontal ridge line and two end walls that reach to the sloping rakeboards. Therefore, the roof alone differentiates a building's walls and orients its mass.

(4) The last type of historic roof is the hip roof, or Dutch cap roof, whose equally pitched roof planes intersect along their outer corners. This roof may have a peak at its center or be truncated. On all four sides it has a horizontal cornice. Other roof types, such as the mansard, which is double-pitched on all sides, are not common in the town and were not built on the island until after the whaling era passed.

There are areas of the town that do not conform completely to common roof gables. For example, the harbor and wharf areas of small-scale ver-

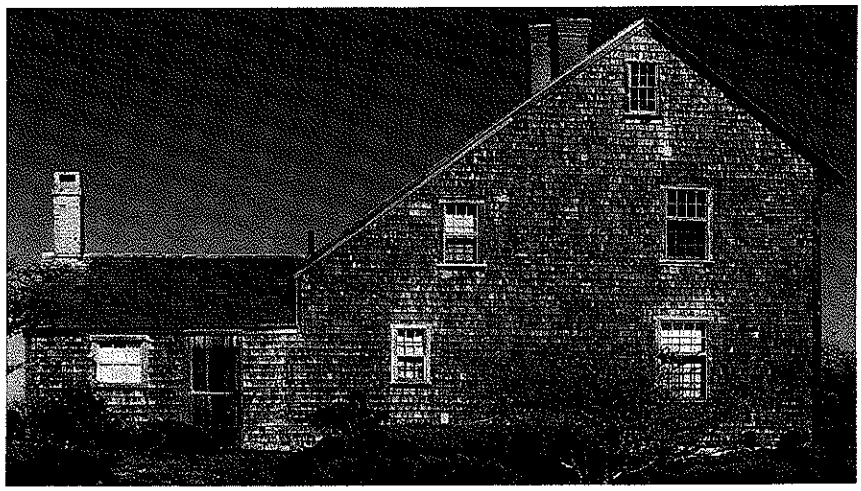


Figure 60. The Elihu Coleman House, a fine example of lean-to roof form.

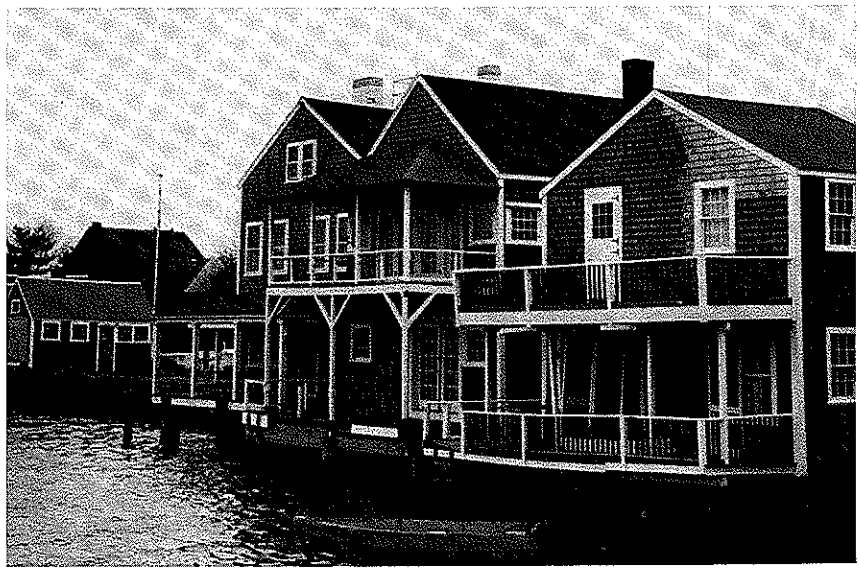


Figure 61. There is no standard roof pitch in the North Wharf area.

No. 26 Seth Folger House

No. 28 Folger House
(Benj. Tupper House)

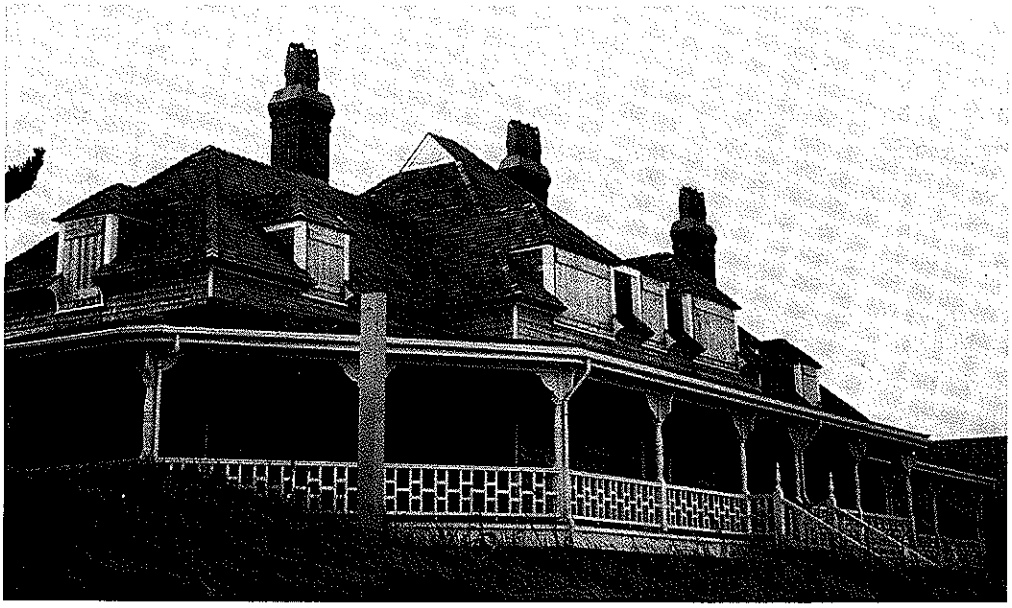


Figure 62. Sandanwede, Hulbert Avenue, displays the complex roofing of Victorian styles.

Later Styles

nacular and large commercial structures contain a range of roof pitches. These buildings were either built for a specific functional purpose or developed ad hoc over time, using limited materials. For example, on picturesque North Wharf there is no standard roof pitch. Rather, harmony is achieved by other similarities of the roofs and buildings (fig. 61).

Areas of the town built up during the late 1800s and after were influenced by the contemporary styles of their era and did not always follow the traditional roof types. Summer cottages and guesthouses built along Cliff Road, Easton Street and Hulbert Avenue have picturesque roofs representative of the current popular styles. The often complex and interpenetrated masses of these structures were capped by complicated roofs. An elaborate relic of this era of Nantucket architecture is Sandanwede (1881), now at the end of Hulbert Avenue (fig. 62). Such self-contained extravagance by contrast emphasizes the simple harmony of the old town's gabled homes.

Pitch

Roofs on new structures in the town should conform to one of the four traditional roof shapes. Flat roofs are not permitted. The recommended pitch for gable roofs is 9 in 12 inches and in general the minimum appropriate pitch is 8 in 12 inches. Pedimented facades are special cases that may have a rise of as little as 6 in 12 inches. A lean-to should have a pitch similar to the typical gable roof and the same pitch on both sides of the roof which should

Orange Street—east side

No. 13 Francis Barker House No. 11 Nathan Beebe House

have proportions of 1:2. Because only a few gambrel and hipped-roof buildings were constructed during the whaling era, they should not be used indiscriminately in historic Nantucket.

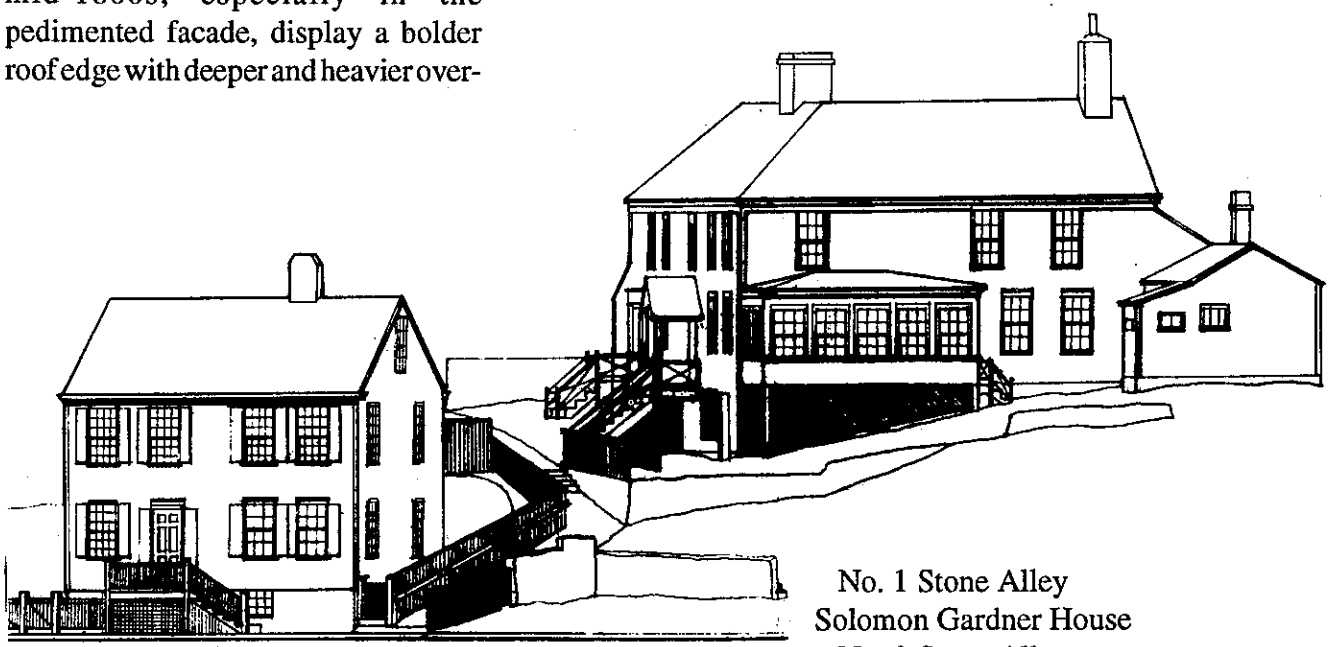
In any case, roof designs should harmonize with the rhythm of roofs along the street. Where an area shows a preference for a certain roof type, shape and pitch different from those recommended here, new roofs should be guided by the character already established. In no instance will a roof of less than a 4 in 12 inch pitch be permitted. Roofs on additions to existing buildings should be appropriate to the period and style of the original structure. The roof pitch and detailing of an addition should be compatible with the main roof.

Roof Overhang Small overhangs, or eaves, are part of the tight form and economical use of materials characteristic of the island. Although some early lean-to houses had overhanging front cornices, typically the intersections of the roof and wall planes of houses were crisply expressed. The later Greek Revival structures of the mid-1800s, especially in the pedimented facade, display a bolder roof edge with deeper and heavier overhangs of an entablature and raking cornice. Divergence from the historical precedent was not uncommon in the summer houses of the late 19th century, with their intersecting roof planes and verandas.

New construction should follow the tradition of a small roof overhang along the bottom edge of the roof or follow another historic cornice detail. A maximum overhang of 12 inches is recommended along the horizontal cornice. It should be boxed without exposed rafters and be detailed in keeping with the rest of the house. In general, the roof should not project over the gable end but should finish with plain rakeboards. (For architectural drawings of cornice details, see Appendix D.)

12-inch Maximum

Roof Dormers The historic houses of Nantucket were not built with dormers in their roofs. The 'Block' of five row houses, 15 to 23 Orange Street (built in 1831), was the only use of dormers on residences in the town prior to the Civil War. When Nantucket grew as a summer resort, dormers were frequently added to old



No. 9 Elisha Green House

No. 1 Stone Alley
Solomon Gardner House
No. 3 Stone Alley
Paul Gardner House

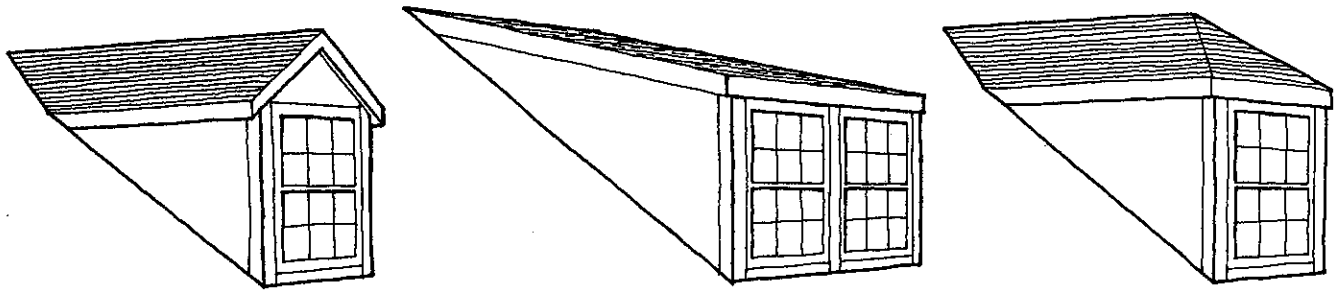


Figure 63. Gable dormer—after mid-1800s. Shed dormer—early 1900s. Hip dormer—late 1800's (not common)

houses inhabited by summer residents or converted into boarding houses.

Shed Dormers

The first dormers were English or gabled. In the late 19th century, shed dormers also came into use and, less commonly, hip dormers (fig. 63). In recent years, shed dormers have been employed as a ready solution to the problem of second-story expansions on 'Cape' style houses. To encourage a more appropriate means of expansion and to maintain the integrity of the dominant roof plane, the Commission has imposed some restrictions to the design of these dormers. The restrictions adhere to the principle that these dormers can still provide additional second floor area as minor roof elements by using the more traditional $1^1/_2$ and $1^3/_4$ eaves lines.

Gable vs. Shed

Dormer design and placement should not destroy the simplicity of the roof plane of Nantucket buildings, which is an important aspect of the character of its architecture. On pre-Civil War buildings, dormers should not be placed within the front slope of the roof in order to maintain the historic integrity of the building. On later buildings, gables or English dormers may be used on the front roof slope. Shed dormers, particularly trunk or full ones, which cover the main roof plane, are neither appropriate nor desirable. To encourage design elements more in keeping with the historic integrity of the island, their use should adhere to the following guidelines: Generally, several small shed dormers are preferable to one large one, and only on the rear roof plane. They should be in modest proportion to the rest of the house, with a minimum 4/12 pitch. The height of the shingled wall should be minimal. The dormer should be set back at least one foot from the building face and three feet from each gable end. The face of a shed dormer should be predominantly window. On the side or rear of pre-Civil War buildings, gabled dormers are also preferred. Shed dormers are acceptable on the side or rear of a post-Civil War building as long as they do not cover most of the roof plane.

Flush

Flush gable dormers are generally discouraged in the Old Historic District. Flush gable dormers are so called because they are 'flush' with a wall plane, rather than set back on the roof. In areas that are predominantly $1^3/_4$-story homes, or in instances where an undersized lot exists, the Commission reserves the right to allow flush dormers in order to encourage more appropriate massing. When these dormers are allowed, they should demonstrate expansion appropriate to the period or style, therefore harmonizing with the pre-1846 architecture. Because it is a feature incorporated into the face of a building, care should be given that it relate in placement and proportion to the windows in the wall underneath. In no case shall flush

dormers be allowed to alter the main facade of a historic structure. (See general guidelines, pg. 109., for other specifications for dormers on the roof.)

Skylights These windows in the roof are a recent development in Nantucket architecture. Their closest historical precedent is the roof hatch, or 'scuttle,' of an old house, which permitted access to the chimney and roof of the building. While desirable for opening up the area below the roof to light and air, skylights are generally easily visible on the elevated roof plane. However, if well designed, a skylight is one of the simplest means of altering a roof to admit light and air without disrupting its plane surface, and it is less noticeable than a dormer.

Roof Hatch as Model

Skylights should have a flat configuration, be parallel, and as close, to the roof plane as possible. Bubble or other protruding skylight designs are specifically prohibited. The general guidelines for skylight design (see pg. 110) apply to the defined old historic districts, with the following restrictions: In these areas, skylights may not be placed on any front roof plane. On side or rear elevations of low visibility, or in any location visible from a public way, skylights must be placed on the upper one-third of the roof plane.

Placement

For standard installations, skylights may be as large as 2 feet by 3 feet, but no larger (fig. 64). Metal skylights are not appropriate in the historic districts. All skylights in these areas must be constructed of wood and have true divided lights with muntins.

Size

Chimneys The large central chimney of the lean-to house and, subsequently, of the typical Nantucket house is a distinctive feature of the island's architecture. The center chimney was massive (typically $4\frac{1}{2}$ by 6 feet), containing three to six flues, was flanged and located on or near the ridge line. Later, 17th century brick chimneys were at least three feet square. In the early 1800s smaller, separate chimneys were placed at opposite ends of the house to allow for the transverse hall and other changes in interior circulation. (See Appendix D for detail drawings of chimney styles.)

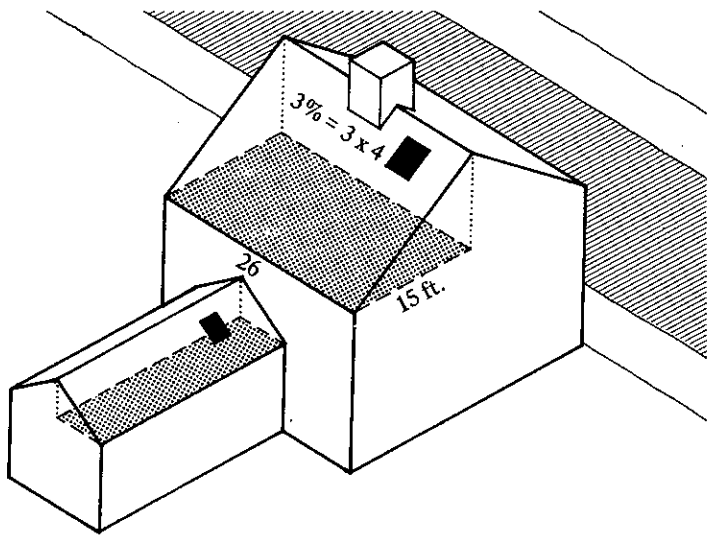


Figure 64. Skylights are not approved on the front roof plane. The standard size is three percent of the floor area under the roof plane.

On the main mass of a historic building any new chimney should be of a design appropriate to the period of the building, especially in its placement and size. Chimneys must be of select common brick or of bricks with a parged surface and, if necessary, may be painted gray (without a black top border). Exterior brick chimneys and brick chimneys of narrow width are discouraged in town. Metal pipe chimneys are not

Required Masonry

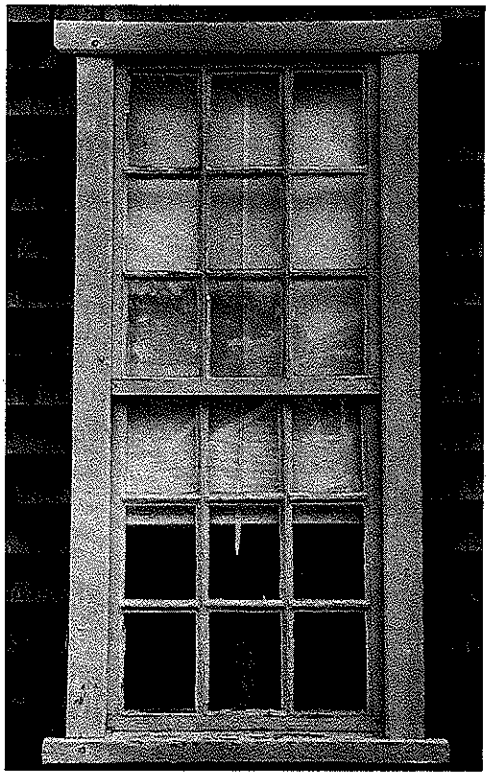


Figure. 65. Plain plank window, Maria Mitchell Birthplace, Vestal Street, 1700s.

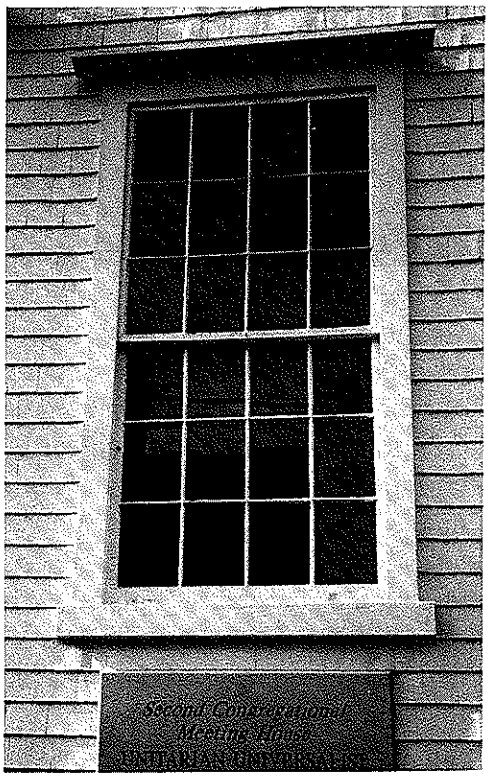


Figure 66. Unitarian Church built in 1809, exhibits 12 over 12 windows typical from the late 1700s through the early 1800s.

permitted in the town except where concealed, because they are not historic, they are too small in scale and their surface deteriorates in the salty air. They may be used only if boxed in to create brick chimney dimensions and then are faced with real brick. Metal pipe caps are not acceptable; instead, a flat horizontal metal plate supported on piers over the chimney is recommended, although this is not traditional.

Windows and Doorways

Evolution of Window Types The types of windows used in the whaling town changed slowly. Old English houses, built at first, typically had side-hung sashes with small leaded, diamond-shaped panes. These small casements, used until about 1720, were placed singly in the wall or in groups of two or three. In the 18th century houses of Nantucket, the use of windows was restricted by the cost and availability of glass, the limited size of the window panes and the loss of heat from poorly heated and insulated buildings. The largest windows were reserved for the facade of the house and were placed in three, four and sometimes five bays across the front wall. The windows were usually aligned horizontally and, on two-story dwellings, vertically. However, axial symmetry of the facade was not essential; rather, an ordered balance of the window placement was important. On the side and rear elevations, windows were usually smaller and placed without regard to symmetry. (See fig. 108, pg. 112)

History

The size of window panes increased in the 18th and 19th centuries although the sashes remained approximately the same size. For most of the 18th century, small panes, about 5 by 7 inches,

were used with wooden muntins. From 1790 to about 1825 panes in 'typical' houses were commonly 7 by 9 inches. The predominant sash was 12/12, or 24, lights, while some were narrow 9/9. Muntins decreased in width over time. After the War of 1812 larger panes of glass became available. Double-hung 6/6 sashes using panes 8 x 10 inches, then 9½ by 13 inches and 10 by 14 inches, were the primary window types installed after 1825. In houses of the Federal and Greek Revival styles exhibiting grandeur and formality, windows were placed symmetrically in the facade. Buildings of these styles also usually displayed glass lights around the door and occasionally included ornamentally shaped windows in facade pediments or gable ends.

A characteristic of Nantucket fenestration was the replacement and reuse of old sashes. Many houses have 6/6 windows in their facade, while their side and rear walls have smaller paned 12/12 windows. This may be attributed to a change to newer popular styles and perhaps to the financial status of the owner. The upgrading of window sashes to larger pane size even though of about the same sash dimensions continued after the Civil War when large panes of glass came into use. New style windows installed after the 1850s had only one or two panes per sash, as can still be seen in some old buildings in the town.

Figure. 67. Greek Revival window, 1830-60.

Window Character An essential characteristic of a window on Nantucket was the manner in which it was placed in the exterior wall. Windows were holes punched in these walls and were surrounded by uniform surface material. Windows were neither expressed nor located in reference to visible structural members, nor were they used as a type of wall surface. A

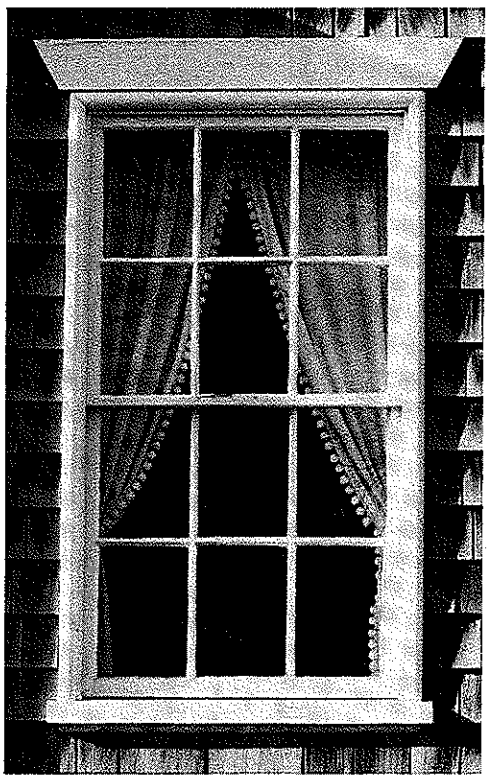


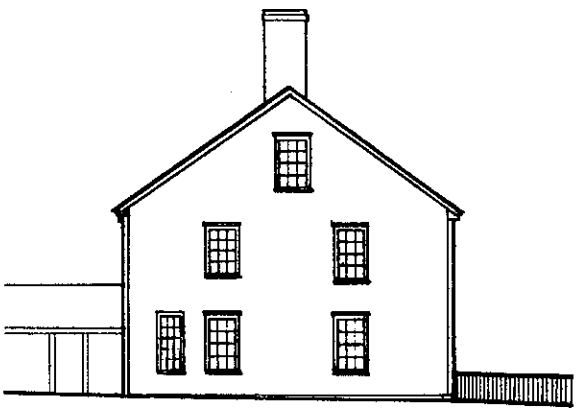
Figure 68. 'Bull-nose' casing around a window on Orange Street.

window was seldom placed against the corner of a building. However, in two-story facades they were generally placed up to the cornice. The use of muntins provided small-scale dimensions across the window, softening its contrast within the wall surface.

Frame The location of windows in the wall has traditionally been emphasized by their frames. In early wooden houses the heavy pegged frames protrude about two inches to form an accent to the interruption of the surface (fig. 65). Windows of the late 18th century and early 19th century had the wide Boston-type casings with a protruding board placed horizontally at the top of the frame. The accent shadow of the projecting board (up to five inches) of this distinctive Nantucket frame contributes to the simple elegance of the building elevations (fig. 66). In brick and all Greek Revival buildings the fenestration detailing was kept close to the wall plane. A common wooden Greek Revival frame was characterized by the splayed wood lintel above, simulating stone (fig. 67), and the 'bull-nose' casing (fig. 68). On simple functional buildings in the town, plain wide board casings were used around windows to seal them. This vernacular detail, still used today, similarly emphasized the window location within the wall, particularly if the casings were painted a contrasting white color. (For architectural drawings of window frame types, see Appendix D.)

Boston-type

Greek Revival



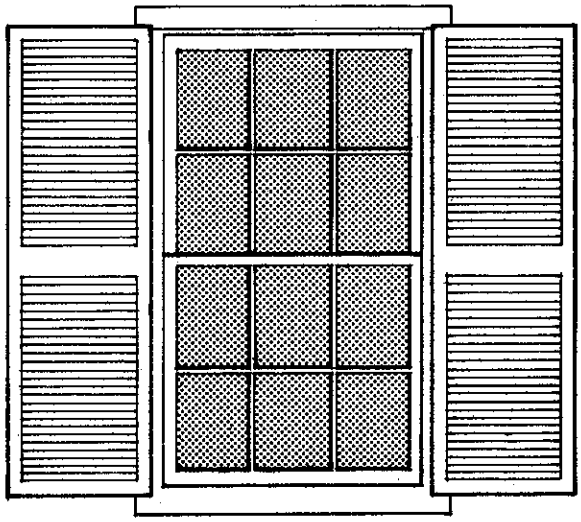


Figure 69. Many old windows had no shutters, but had pleasing proportions. Shutters should be operable and sized to cover the sash.

Harmony of Fenestration The fenestration of a Nantucket building typically shows a strong sense of order and unity, evident on all sides of the structure. Major contributing factors were: (1) the use of only a few sizes of windows of basically the same type; (2) the use of a single window pane size as a uniform module in a building's windows and even its frontispiece; (3) the use of a consistent sill height (floor to window bottom), as a rule, 31 inches; (4) the use of balanced simple proportions of the windows; and (5) the uniformity and simplicity of the window frames.

The sense of balance and order came not only from the alignment of the windows but from the rhythm of their placement, that is, the recurrent alternation of solid (wall) and void (window). The proportions of the double-hung window of 12/12 or 6/6 lights were roughly 1:1:5 to 1:2, width to height. On the facade the wall spaces between windows horizontally were

12/12 or 6/6

often not much greater or less than the width of the window itself. Moreover, the similarity of fenestration between adjacent facades gave a unity and order to the streetscape. On historic buildings, the area of windows was a low percentage of the wall area. For instance, the facades of four-bay typical Nantucket houses had a ratio of window area (including the door as a wall opening) to overall wall area of under 20 to 25 percent, and their less important side and rear elevations had an even lower ratio of window area. (See the India Street elevations, pgs. 56-57).

On historic buildings, any new or replacement windows should be appropriate to the period and style of the building. In particular, the fenestration of the street facade should be preserved or restored to its original form. On a new addition to an old building, only windows that have characteristics similar to the historic window types, in terms of materials, size, proportion, scale and frame type are permitted. They should be arranged in an ordered, balanced manner, as observed in old buildings. Twentieth-century window types, such as sliding glass doors, picture windows, bay windows, flex-vents, horizontal tilt-out windows, etc., having little similarity to the older windows are not allowed because they inject disorder into the established setting. Applications for use of non-historic window types in new additions will be reviewed strictly. Sliding glass doors are not permitted if visible from a public way or in an original pre-Civil War structure. On other walls not visible from a public way, it is recommended that only one sliding glass door be installed.

Arrangement

In the design of new structures in the town the use of historic window types and arrangements is required.

The fenestration of a new building should satisfy the functional requirements of the building while harmonizing with the scale, proportion and rhythm of the fenestration of nearby buildings. Certain window designs considered inappropriate in the town are: those of irregular shapes, such as triangles or trapezoids (except as small balanced accents in a building elevation); large single-sheet windows; and metal or plastic window sashes. Care should be taken with the amount of glass used in a wall of a new building. While it is recognized that the windows in new houses do not have the technical or heating constraints of the past, and that they must meet contemporary functional requirements, new buildings should retain a ratio of glass area to wall surface compatible with their neighbors.

Inappropriate Designs

Energy The first houses built on Nantucket included practical energy-saving measures that grew naturally from a windswept landscape largely unprotected from the elements. Among these were: facing houses to the south, using trees and other natural features as windbreaks, and clustering them to create additional wind protection. Typically, a compact building mass was built around a central chimney which provided a core heat source. Multiple flues allowed each room a fireplace. Many of these traditional building practices are as applicable today as they were 300 years ago.

Historic Measures

New buildings should take advantage of siting considerations for maximum sun orientation and wind shelter. Deciduous trees planted south of the building (at least 10 feet from the foundation), and evergreens planted to the north/northwest, are effective.

Other traditional, energy-efficient architectural elements should be consid-

Energy Aids

ered. Cupolas, transoms and scuttles allow ventilation. Shutters, porches and awnings provide shade. Vestibules protect entryways from the wind. Sun rooms and greenhouses may provide additional solar gain. Guidelines for attached secondary masses, known as warts, should be followed here with regard to proportion, design, shape, scale and roof pitch. Vertical glazing for greenhouses is recommended, to avoid rapid overheating.

Energy-Conserving Measures

Retrofitting measures with the highest potential for saving energy will not impair the visual character of a historic structure. Passive measures, including the evaluation of how and when a building is used, should be determined before active measures are taken. Thermostat and light control, ventilation and properly serviced mechanical equipment are primary considerations. Attic insulation and reduction of heat loss through the roof should be addressed first, for maximum impact and conservation.

Doors and Windows

Historic windows should be preserved. Energy may be conserved with interior storm applications which are often preferable to exterior storm windows. The character and significance of a historic structure should determine exterior storm window design and appropriateness. Most solid or paneled wood doors have excellent thermal properties and should not be replaced. Metal doors are not recommended because they corrode in Nantucket's moist environment. Storm doors should be compatible in design.

Solar panel applications should not be considered until initial conservation efforts as described above are implemented. It is inappropriate to apply a large array of solar panels as they often produce far less energy than a well-insulated wall, roof or storm window might.

The Commission has additional materials which address energy conservation as it applies to historic preservation in its office.

Screens, Storm Doors, Metal Awnings

There are many innovative alternatives to metal window and door fixtures which deserve consideration. Screen or storm doors of a fancy ornamental design and metal awnings are inappropriate in the town and discouraged elsewhere on the island. Storm sashes and screen should be bought or painted in the same color as the house sashes or frame. The color of storm or screen doors should be coordinated with that of actual door

Figure 70. Simple board door, 18th century lean-to, Main Street.

and trim. Unpainted aluminum items may be left natural, but they should be painted to blend with dark trim.

Shutters Shutters, also called louvered blinds, were first placed beside windows and front doors in Nantucket about 1840. They were used for privacy, not for climatological control. Nearly two-thirds of the old houses on Nantucket never had shutters because their well-proportioned facades did not need their decorative effect. The early shutters were quite heavy and did not have movable louvers. Solid-paneled, bilateral shutters used on the mainland were not used in Nantucket.

Because shutters do not improve the appearance of many Nantucket houses, the decision to use them should be carefully considered. Further, they are an expense in both initial cost and upkeep. It is recommended that they not be used on the exterior unless clearly beneficial to the building or appropriate to its style and period. Interior shutters, used in 19th century buildings, may be a desirable design solution for today. Shutters should be of sturdy wood construction with louvers. They should be large enough to cover the entire window area. Shutters must be functional and operable, and not look as if they were simply flat-mounted on the wall (fig. 69). (See general guidelines pg. 115.)

Exterior Doorways Entrance doors on Nantucket houses were always well integrated with the fenestration of the facade. Furthermore, the doorway was the main focus of the single-plane facade and generally its most articulated feature. The doorways were even more emphasized when houses were raised on basements after the late 1800s, necessitating that their entrances be served by steps or platforms. Along

Figure 71. Six-panel door, typical Nantucket house, 1700s.

the tightly settled town street, the rhythm of the doors and entranceways adds greatly to the delightful character and friendliness of the public thoroughfare.

Door Types

The earliest doors on English and lean-to houses were plain board and batten doors set off only by their pegged frames (fig. 70). The typical Nantucket house that appeared on the island about 1730 commonly had a six-panel door with center rail. The first such doors simply had pegged plank frames with headers, but many later versions had a top light or transom (fig. 71).

Size, Material, Function

After the Revolution, the frontis-

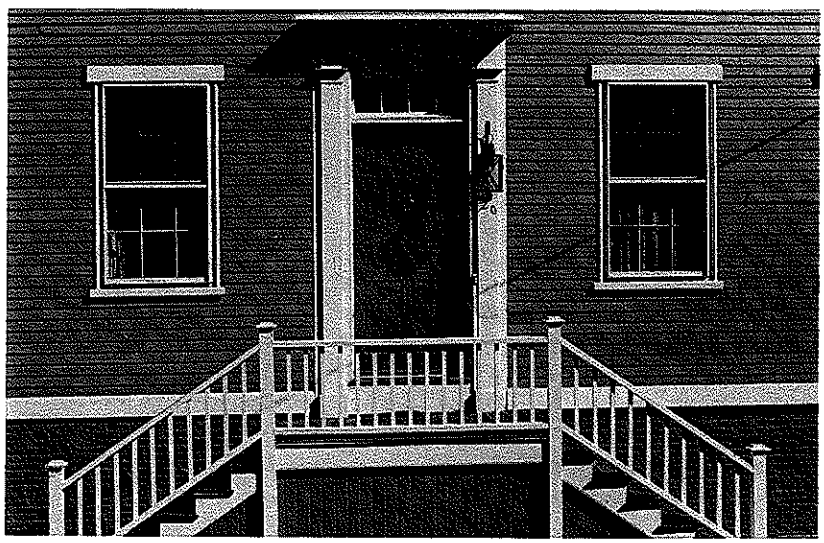


Figure 72. Transitional doorway, early Federal, late 1700s to early 1800s.

Figure 73. Federal doorway, early 1800s.

piece framing the door came into use, although it was at first not ornate. Most doorways were capped by a protruding horizontal board or molding (fig. 72). A common frontispiece and door that had sidelights was associated with the centered transverse hall (fig. 73). These doorway designs, often taken from English architecture books, represent early external influences on island architecture.

Monumental Greek Revival style houses built after 1830 introduced doorways framed by pilasters and an entablature above (fig. 74). Due to new ideas of penetration of space and spaciousness, expensive houses had porchless entries recessed into the front plane of the building or columned porticos attached (fig. 75). House fenestration, including doorway placement, became concerned with formal axial symmetry.

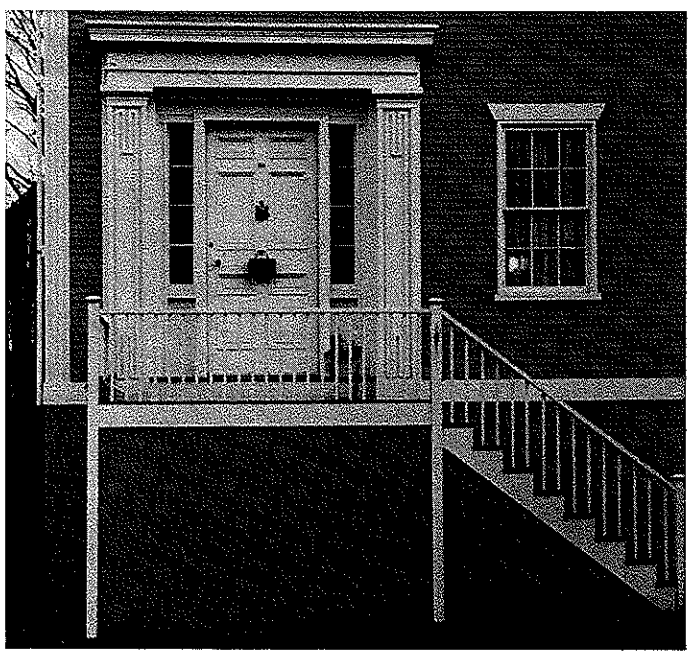


Figure 74. Greek Revival doorway, after 1830.

Because of its importance on a historic facade, a doorway or frontispiece should not be altered except to maintain or restore its character as is appropriate to the style and period of the house. As a general rule, the lights of the front windows should be of equivalent size to the doorway lights. Enclosed projections over the front door are not a traditional feature and should not be used.

Traditional Expression

For new houses in the town, it is suggested that main entranceways follow, in general, the example of Nantucket tradition: The doorway should be located on the front side of the building plane closest to the street. New entrances along a street in the town should conform to any predominant positioning, scale and rhythm of existing entranceways. Appropriate entranceway design includes not only the door and frontispiece but also any door steps and platform, and the related fences and walks connecting it to the public sidewalk.

French Doors French doors are characterized by having glass panes throughout the door's entire area, and are usually hung in pairs. French doors were not incorporated into houses on Nantucket until the late 19th century and traditionally were used as ground floor access to rear gardens. At no time were they—or are they—appropriate as main entrance ways. To that end, the Commission recommends their use

Limited Use

be limited to rear, ground level elevations and discourages their use on any elevation visible from a public way.

Exterior Architectural Elements

Many historic Nantucket buildings have had architectural elements such as steps, entrance platforms, roof walks and porches attached to them. Although these additions were built to serve specific functions, they also are essential to the visual charm and personality of Nantucket buildings and hence, the variety and delight of the street. These elements have been built with small wooden members and trim detail, often in open configurations that contrast with and enliven the solidity and completeness of the house volume. Painting them white or a light color has contributed to their lightness and delicacy. These elements are extremely valuable because their small dimensions help establish scale for the mass of the house.

Design, Color

While the shapes of Nantucket houses are typically very similar, the exterior architectural elements are often different. They are expressions not only of the style of the building but of the personal taste of the owner. Since these elements are not related to interior functions, many have been replaced over time to 'update' the house. In turn many of these more recent additions, such as Victorian door hoods, have been removed by current owners to restore the original historic appearance of the building. Decisions on desirability and degree of such restoration need to be determined according to the existing attractiveness and integrity of the building.

Changes, Additions

Figure 75. Greek Revival portico, mid-1800s.

Figure 76. 28 Cliff Road — porches are popular exterior living spaces.

Door Platforms and Steps Steps and platforms became important in the town when houses were built on basements. Such houses did occur before 1800 but the high basement was a notable feature of the Greek Revival style. Where the house faced the sidewalk, the run of the steps was turned parallel to the street. The platform and steps provided a transitional space from the public outdoors to the private interior. When there was a small front yard and forward-facing

Positioning

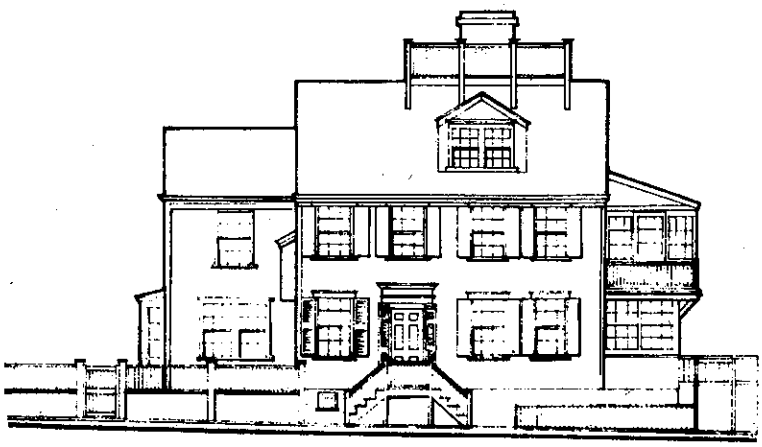
steps, the platform railing was usually integrated or connected with the front fence as part of the delineation of the street space, creating a rhythm along the street.

The door stoops and railings were wooden. Typical wooden platforms had railings supported on 1-$^{1}/_{4}$-inch balusters with a turned newel, tapered from the bottom, or 1-inch square balusters with a 4-inch square newel.

Materials Masonry steps and platforms of stone were employed for some of the stylish, expensive houses of the ship owners, etc., built after 1820. Masonry steps usually had iron railings with balusters spaced about six inches on center. The use of brick for entrance steps originated about 1900.

For any historic structure, the front entranceway including steps and platform should be appropriate in detail to the size and style of the building. The original should be maintained or restored. Brick door steps and platforms are not appropriate for pre-Civil War Nantucket houses. For a post-Civil War building, steps of wood, brick or stone may be approved if they are of tasteful design related to the building.

Design *They should provide a transitional entrance space linked directly to the street. It is recommended that new entranceways of contemporary buildings reflect the characteristics of historic steps and platforms—contrast of open structural members with the wall plane and attachment to the exterior wall is preferable to incorporation as part of the massing.*



No. 25 Orange Street
Joshua Bunker House
(Rev. Samuel Snelling House)

Porches Porches, verandas and decks (other than Classic Revival porticos) did not exist in the town before the Civil War. These exterior living

History spaces were a development of the late 1800s when new life styles and spatial concepts emerged as part of picturesque Victorian architecture. The Shingle style of the late 1880s carried the idea to its fullest with entire verandas and porches integrated into the massing of the building. As Nantucket became a popular summer resort, exterior living spaces were built into new houses or added onto old ones. These were important places for relaxing, entertaining or enjoying the view or air (fig.76).

Compatibility *On a historic building, a porch should not be of a size or placement that will detract from the historic integrity of the building. Porch additions should be kept to the rear where they can be unobtrusive. As with any addition, their detailing should be compatible with the period and style of the main structure.*

A new porch in the whaling era town is fitting if designed in a simple manner similar to the additive massing traditional to the island. The relationship of the roof of the porch to the other massing of the building is an important consideration.

Decks Decks, one of the simplest and most economical outdoor living spaces to build, are increasingly popular. A deck is a problematic addition to a building, whether old or new, because the raised deck sticks out from the building and does not have a roof

to help it relate to the building's massing. Further, too often a deck is made of crude or coarse construction, such as 2- by 4-inch railings, incompatible with the simple refinement associated with details of old Nantucket houses. Decks of this nature do not appear as an integral part of the building but as an insecurely attached element.

All decks in the designated old historic districts are restricted to first floor rear only. They should exhibit an attention to detail that is in keeping with the style of the house.

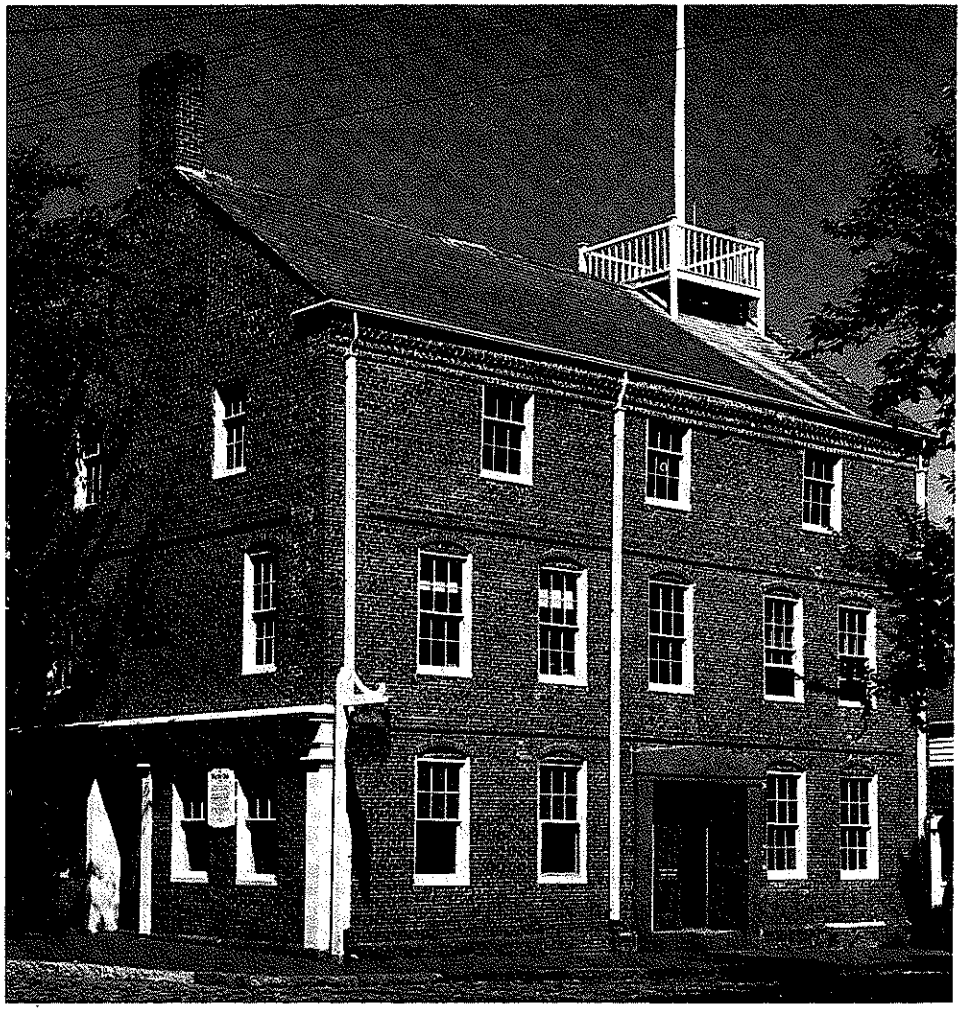


Figure 77. Roof walks were important in whaling days, as seen here on the Pacific Club, originally the Rotch Warehouse, 1774.

Roof Walks These roof platforms (called widow's walks since the late 19th century) were added to Nantucket houses in the 18th century as the town turned to the sea for its livelihood (fig. 77). They provided lookouts for incoming ships, vistas of the harbor and town and a place to look for chimney fires. Although not unique to Nantucket, their prevalence on the island indicates the almost total dependence of the population on the whaling industry. In 1811, Joseph Sansom wrote in the *Port Folio:* "Every other house in this seafaring place has a lookout upon the roof or a vane at the gable end: to see what ships have arrived from sea or whether the wind is fair for the packets." After the whaling industry collapsed, many of these roof walks were not maintained.

History

Eventually they were removed for their wood or blown off by winter winds. The extent of their disappearance is

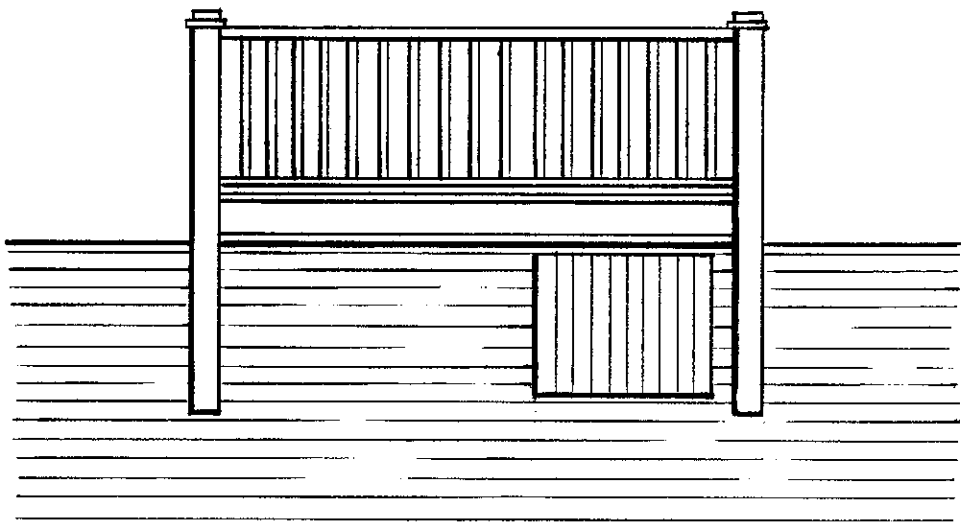


Figure 78. A traditional roof walk design.

indicated by a 1937 census of historic houses in the town that showed only about 10 percent of them with roof walks remaining. The cupola of the Classic Revival style supplanted the roof walk on houses of the prosperous whaling years.

Traditional Expression

Roof walks should follow traditional design and construction detail (fig. 78). The following recommendations apply: The clear expression of the roof slope should not be obliterated; skirts or solid aprons under the platform, generally, are not appropriate; and access should be from a traditional hatchway, or scuttle, with a wood cover. Because roof walks were historically found on houses of two or more stories, they are not appropriate on 1- to 1 1/2-story structures.

Exterior Stairs Exterior stairs are not part of the architectural tradition on Nantucket and so are not considered appropriate. Proposals for outside stairs will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis, according to visibility.

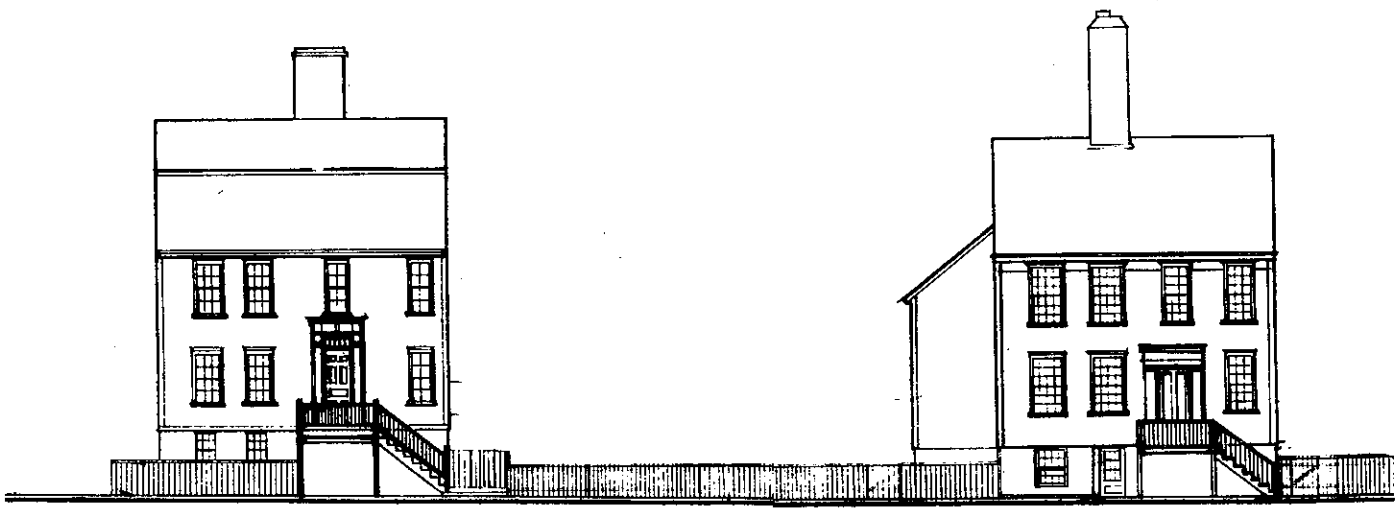
Surface Materials

Wall Surfaces Small overlapping cedar shingles served the need for a tight weather seal for all surfaces and were an easily imported material. Clapboard came into use in the late 1700s and predominated in the Federal and Greek Revival styles. By 1860, many non-shingled houses graced Nantucket streets. Unfortunately, much of this authentic flavor has been lost over the years as clapboard walls have been replaced with shingles. For example, out of 170 frame Greek Revival houses that originally were faced with clapboards, more than 90 now are surfaced with shingles. This non-original treatment is regrettable, since the rustic, textured shingles are inappropriate to the elegance and formality of these 19th century buildings.

Shingles, Clapboards

Approved Materials

All buildings should be covered in a small-scale textured material traditional to Nantucket—white cedar shingles with a 5-inch exposure, wooden clapboard with a 3 1/2-inch exposure, or select common brick of a uniform red tone as seen in the town. Only one material may be used on any single-wall plane. On a historic building the wall surface material should be appropriate to the period and style of the building. It is inappropriate to shingle any wall of a pre-Civil War building that was originally clapboard.



No.21 Richard Coleman House

No. 19 Silvanos Ewer House

Foundation Materials *Exposed foundations should be of (1) select common brick laid with narrow 1/4-inch mortar joints, (2) stone, or (3) concrete or concrete block if cement parged or grouted. Contemporary houses raised on pilings are discouraged except where required by site conditions, in which case they will be reviewed on their own merits, particularly their compatibility with adjacent buildings.*

Roof Materials *Acceptable roof materials are fire-resistant shingles of rectangular design limited to uniform tones of black, dark green or a dark gray of a value (darkness) no lighter than weathered shingles. By town law, wood shingles may not be used within 1 1/4 miles of the Pacific National Bank unless of certified fire-retardant quality, Class C, three-hour fire rating, because of the danger of fire. Slate roofs are also appropriate.*

Trim and Miscellaneous Details

For most of Nantucket's history, its buildings have had simple detailing and trim derived from Quaker and vernacular custom. The restraint and refinement of the trim on island buildings distinguishes their straightforward designs. On many Nantucket streets there is a similarity of architectural trim and details (with subtle variations) that reflects the consistency of certain house types and their architectural treatment. In the town setting, where buildings are viewed at close range by pedestrians, the details and trim are important to their character and provide much of the charm and pleasant variety seen along the street. Some details are not even noticed at first glance but slowly reveal themselves.

Trim The typically restrained trim of a Nantucket house includes casings, cornerboards, rakeboards and cornices. Many types of casings have been used in the past. Common today is the wide plain Boston type (1 by 4 or 5 inches), but other designs can be modeled after historic windows. A good width provides a weather seal and a strong border around the wall openings. *Cornerboards* were placed at the end of wall planes to resolve the joint of shingles or clapboards and provide an

Styles of trim

Union Street—west side

No. 17 Joseph West House No. 15 William Nichols House

effective weather seal as well. These boards were commonly flat, 1 by 6 inches wide. Some versions had a vertical bead 3/4-inch in diameter at the corner edge. In Classic Revival houses, quoins and pilasters replaced the cornerboards.

These trim pieces were important to clearly accent the edges of the wall surfaces. *Rakeboards* along the sloping gable end, commonly 1 by 6 or 8 inches, were similar to the cornerboards. *Cornices* were small and plain because of the characteristic small roof overhang. Trim and details in Nantucket houses can be observed in the town and used as a source for new buildings. (For scale drawings of trim examples, see Appendix D.)

On historic structures and additions to them, the trim and ornament should be appropriate to the style and period of the house. On new buildings, trim and detailing should continue the Nantucket tradition of simple refinement and straightforwardness.

Gutters and Leaders *Historically, gutters and leaders were made of wood in a circular or square cross-section. This type should be used on historic buildings and is preferred on additions and new structures. On additions to historic buildings, or on new ones, gutters and leaders of metal, painted to inconspicuously match the cornice and trim, may be used.*

Louvers, Vents, etc. *These valuable elements are to be wood and painted to blend with the wall surface. Metal, even anodized aluminum, eventually corrodes in the salt air. Ridge-mounted roof ventilators or tiny cupolas are not traditional to Nantucket and are discouraged on garages, etc.*

House Lights *It is recommended that exterior lights be compatible with the period and style of historic buildings. The light they cast should be warm in color such as incandescent. Metal lanterns, either wall or post mounted, are often used.*

Public Utilities *It is recommended that all electric and telephone lines be placed underground and that meters, etc., be placed where inconspicuous.*

Colors

The subdued tone of building colors in the town of Nantucket gives a quiet harmony to its appearance. The predominance of weathered shingle walls

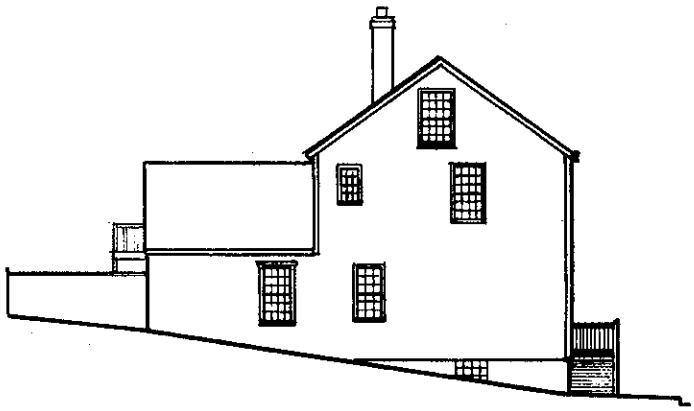
The Orange Street "Block"

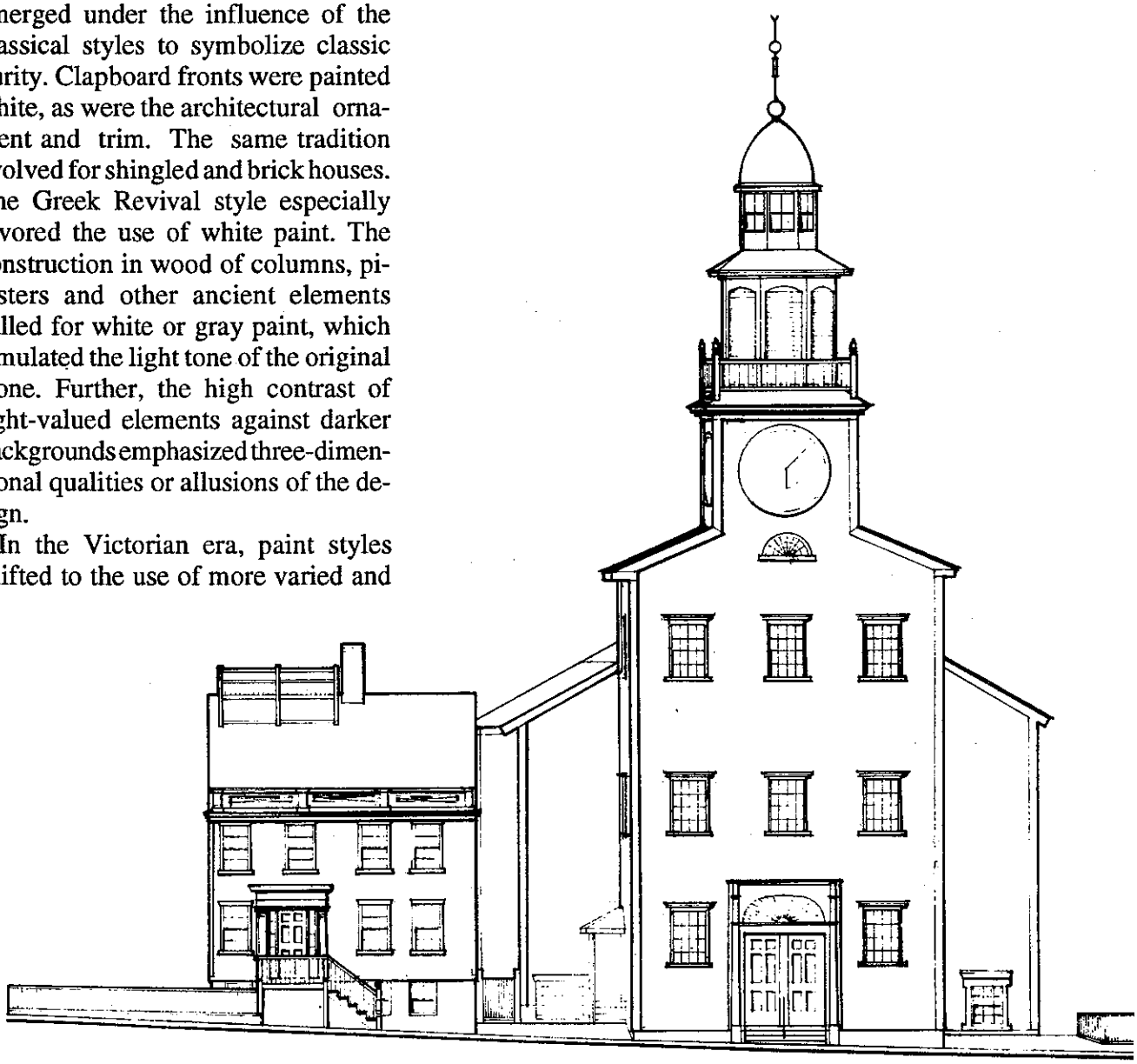
No. 23 George B. Gardner House | No. 21 Joseph Bunker House | No. 19 Thomas Russell House | No. 17 James Easton House | No. 15 Cyrus Pierce House

of a soft gray hue established the underlying color of this palette, familiar throughout the history of the town. In the late 18th century, the prevailing custom was to paint only those surfaces that needed protection from the weather. Dull gray, red and brown were the colors used. Moreover, at that time, the islanders did not have white lead necessary for making white paint. With the style-consciousness of the 19th century, homes adopted a broader range of colors; a writer of 1807 commented that "several of them were painted green."

By far the greatest change of the period was the use of white paint that emerged under the influence of the classical styles to symbolize classic purity. Clapboard fronts were painted white, as were the architectural ornament and trim. The same tradition evolved for shingled and brick houses. The Greek Revival style especially favored the use of white paint. The construction in wood of columns, pilasters and other ancient elements called for white or gray paint, which simulated the light tone of the original stone. Further, the high contrast of light-valued elements against darker backgrounds emphasized three-dimensional qualities or allusions of the design.

In the Victorian era, paint styles shifted to the use of more varied and





No. 13 Harry Pinkham House
(Lawrence Ayers House)
Mass. 1065

Second Congregational Meeting House
Mass. 838

intense colors for bold decorative effect. Photos of the turn of the century show dark trim on many houses, such as green and brown. Yet, walls of gray shingle predominated in the houses built in that era.

In the 20th century it became customary to paint all the exterior trim of a shingled building white, including the window casings (fig. 79). This had the effect of emphasizing the edges of all walls and wall openings, thus enlivening the appearance of the building. Moreover, this monochromatic scheme became another harmonizing influence among buildings of the island.

The colors of Nantucket should be a reflection of its spirit, an old weathered and peaceful town. It is recommended that the colors on walls of buildings be of subdued hue intensity and light to medium value. Foundations and trim may be a subtle variation or contrast with the color of the house. However, elements of Greek Revival trim, such as pilasters, entablatures, etc., should be painted white or other light neutral colors such as gray or sand so that they reflect their classical heritage. Greek Revival trim should not be darker than its background.

Color Recommendations The standard colors are listed as follows:

Figure 79. Exterior trim on shingled houses is often painted white for accent.

Elements	Colors
house trim sashes window frames door frames porches and steps railings leader gutters	white light gray
doors	white black brewster green dark green beige barn red gray blue yellow
wood fences and gates	white light gray
foundations	white light gray
shutters	white light gray dark green brewster green
clapboards	white light gray cream pale yellow
iron fences and gates	black brewster green
chimneys	natural brick cement parged

Authorized light gray is a mix of black and white, with no other hues dominant.

All colors require Commission approval in advance of use. The choice of color for a building must blend with the colors of adjacent buildings and the overall setting.

Other Settlements on the Island

Outside the town of Nantucket are several small settlements, each with its own character. They are water-oriented and consist primarily of cottages built by fishermen and later for summer residents. These are not towns in the image of Nantucket but have different origins and grew in an ad hoc manner over time. Siasconset is the oldest, largest and most diverse of these settlements. Others are Quidnet, Wauwinet, Surfside and Madaket (fig. 80). They are all zoned for 5,000 to 20,000-square feet minimum lot sizes and it is anticipated that they eventually will have public water and/or sewer service.

There is no standard architecture among these clusters in terms of building form or site utilization, although groups of adjacent buildings may show a strong consistency or harmony. The sense of unity in these villages is very dependent on the common identity of the setting and exposure, an almost universal use of shingled walls and a relatedness in terms of bulk, scale, mass shapes and architectural elements such as fences and hedges.

In these areas the primary goal for new construction is to harmonize with the existing building pattern and character. The general guidelines for building in outlying areas (see pg. 101) will in most cases be appropriate for buildings in these clusters, particularly if they are modest buildings of straightforward vernacular style. However, exceptions to the general guidelines may be made where the majority of the architecture of a setting is different from that recommended in those guidelines. In some cases it may even be necessary to diverge from the general guidelines in order to prevent disorder in a setting and to construct a building that blends with the form and style of adjacent structures, for instance, to blend with the picturesque

Goal: Conformity

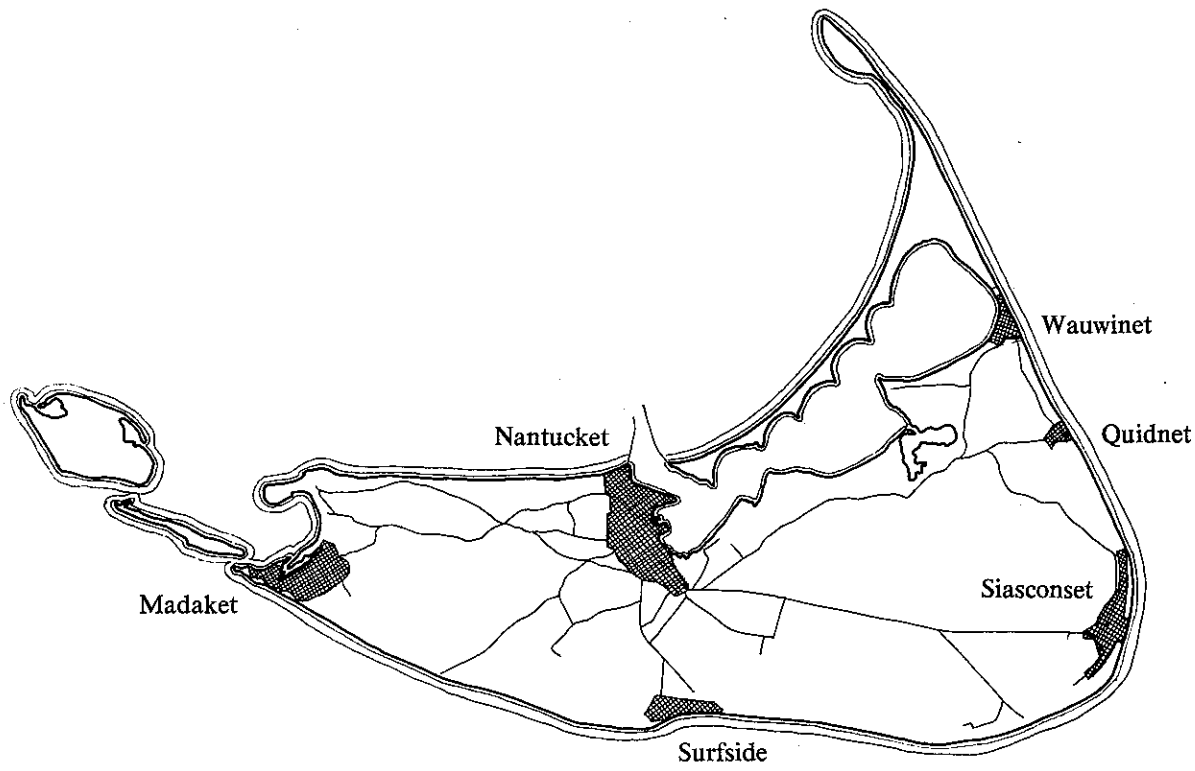


Figure 80. Other settlements of Nantucket Island.

Figure 81. Aerial view of Siasconset.

large cottages of the late 1800s built on the Siasconset bluffs.

When a design for a new building or addition in one of the established settlements is submitted, the applicant should not present the building as an isolated object but as part of an established context. To be appropriate the new construction must instill a sense of relatedness to the surrounding buildings. The most important criteria for this relatedness are the primary design decisions of building siting—scale and massing.

It is not necessary that a new building be similar in all aspects to adjacent structures, but in enough ways that the buildings are compatible visually and together create a consistent sense of place. For example, a difficult problem would be the construction of a modest structure adjacent to a large old cottage. A harmony should be developed by relating characteristics of the existing structure to the design of the new. Height and bulk would be too dissimilar, but mass shapes and perhaps proportion of massing could be related; likewise, the roof pitch and overhang. Similar proportions, facade elements and fenestration, in particular, would also help establish relatedness. The simplest form of coordination would involve wall surface materials, trim details and color. Moreover, along a street the linear elements of fences and hedges could connect the two sites and create a unified edge.

Figure 82. "Auld Lang Syne," c. 1675, one of the original whale stations.

Siasconset

The village of Siasconset, or 'Sconset as the islanders call it, huddled at the southeastern end of the island on a 30-foot bluff above the ocean, is a charming architectural aggregation containing, at its core, primitive fishing huts and elsewhere elaborate cottages of the late 1800s that made it the Newport of Nantucket (fig. 81). 'Sconset, which

originated about 300 years ago, is the only surviving 17th century settlement on the island. Early Sherburne, the first settlement, and Sesachacha, another fishing hamlet, disappeared long ago. 'Sconset's quaint cottages, tight medieval village pattern and picturesque lanes and alleys, architecturally unique in America, have been protected as a historic district since 1955.

Figure 83. "Shanunga" as it looks today.

Village History

'Sconset probably started as one of a series of whale-sighting stages spaced along the edge of the island. In 1676, 'Sconset comprised six little fishermen's huts, rectangular in shape (fig. 82). They gave the hardy fishermen shelter, but little else. Cooking was done outside and fish dried upon racks. At this time, a larger fishing hamlet of 30 huts, Sesachacha, existed at the south edge of the Sesachacha Pond bar. However, this fishing stage declined while 'Sconset grew due to its more favorable site. By 1820, in characteristic Nantucket fashion, most of Sesachacha's structures had been moved south to 'Sconset and reused in the settlement which originated less than 20 years after the first white people arrived on the island.

Architectural Evolution

The early huts at 'Sconset were small, simple gabled boxes. The interior consisted typically of a main room open to the rafters with a fireplace at one end and a pair of small chambers for sleeping boarded off at the other end. Above these staterooms, as they were called, was a 'hanging loft' in the garret reached by a crude ladder or steps. The spaces inside these homes were small. For instance, in "Shanunga", c. 1682,

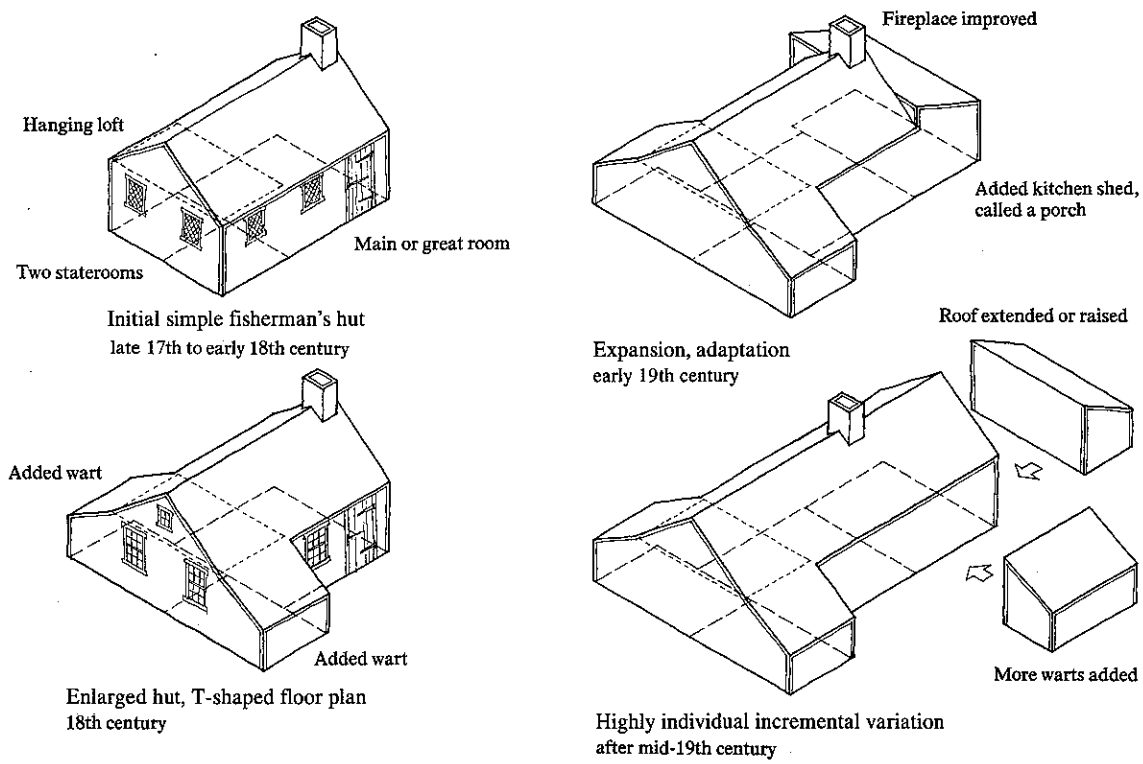


Figure 84. Evolution of Siasconset fishing hut.

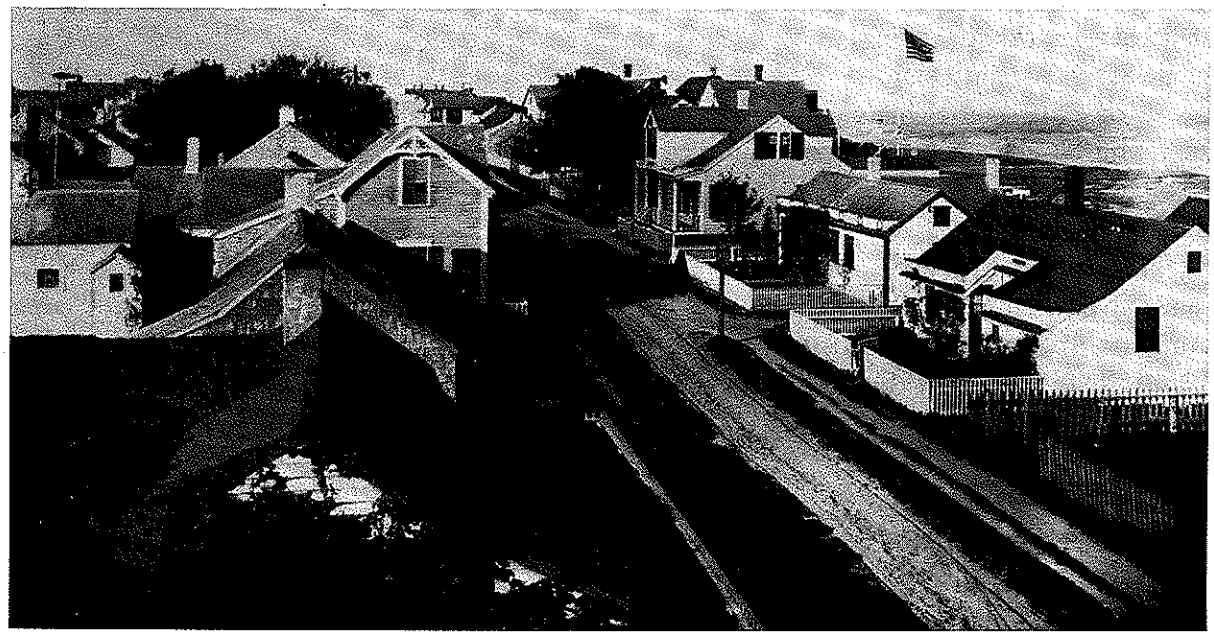


Figure 85. Broadway Street in Siasconset, 1899.

the 'great room' was 12 by 15 feet and each chamber was seven feet square. These buildings were low and built directly on the ground. Their 8- to 9-inch pitch roofs ran to a ridge less than 15 feet from the ground. At first there was no fireplace, only a dirt hearth against a plastered wall and, instead of a flue, a hole in the roof (fig. 83).

In the 18th century, these crude huts were gradually enlarged and improved by the seasonal fishermen. The sloped roof was extended downward on both sides to within three or four feet of the ground. These small shed wings, called 'warts', were added to enlarge the tiny staterooms and resulted in a T-shaped plan. Another typical addition was a kitchen; known as the 'porch', it was commonly placed against the gable end with the fireplace (fig. 84).

These houses were built in a very straightforward manner with the limited materials available. The wood of old structures was reused as was the wood from shipwrecks. Roofs were simply made of 'clinkers', boards overlapped vertically or horizontally, or of wood shingles. The exterior walls were at first bevel-edged siding boards 12- to 24-inches wide joined to create a flush surface. Crude overlapping clapboards were also used, but it is thought that not until after 1800 were wooden shingles commonly used. Old windows were hauled in from town and reused wherever needed irrespective of differences in size and shape. 'Leaves',or single, side-hinged board shutters used for sealing each window, were very common. The entrance to a fishing cottage was a simple board door that always swung outward for reasons of wind and space. These quaint buildings were not designed; they simply grew according to need, and materials used depended on what could be found or improvised.

Building Pattern

The pattern of the old settlement, which is as important to the character of 'Sconset as are the details and shapes of the buildings, was not planned but developed from common sense and necessity. Because they were located on a high level area devoid of sheltering vegetation, the houseswere built gable end to gable end, only a few feet apart along three narrow lanes that ran generally parallel to the bank, facilitating both protection and a feeling of

community. The scale was low and small; cottages were set 10 to 50 feet apart along the lanes, separated only by a gently meandering set of paths. Diminutive cross walks, some only 3 feet wide, reached between all the structures connecting street to street. One street, later called Broadway, was wider and pleasantly terminated by houses at either end. Overall, 'Sconset was a dense cluster with about 10 lots per acre. In 1776, 'Sconset's first public well was dug, thereby making rain barrels under the gutters obsolete and creating Pump Square, a favorite meeting place. By 1791 the settlement had grown to 30 dwellings.

By the early 19th century, 'Sconset had become a respectable little community. Fishermen took their dories out over the waves for cod; ship captains and whalers enjoyed its seaside peacefulness after their long voyages, preferring the quiet to the bustle of town. The simple cottages underwent a new stage of evolution in the addition of new rooms, commonly as sheds or gables added to the fireplace end. As Nantucket prospered, it became fashionable for whole families to retreat to 'Sconset.

'Sconset was destined for a heyday as a summer resort, beginning in 1873 when the Ocean View Hotel was built and the Sunset Heights subdivision on the south bluff was developed by C.H. Robinson. Widely and rapidly, the health resort attributes of the setting were expounded. By 1884 the Nantucket Railroad was extended to 'Sconset and new hotels were erected. People from theatrical, academic and wealthy circles sought the unpretentious life of this village. The new buildings of the era reflected the popular styles of the day: The Stick style was rapidly replaced by the Shingle style, used for the many large cottages built in Sankaty Heights, which was developed in 1882 along the north bluff. In the late 1800s trees were planted throughout 'Sconset, which had been barren until that time. Only in this century has it become the shaded hamlet known today and have the hedges on large outer lots become an important element of the setting. To accommodate greater use, many of the original 'Sconset huts were expanded with more warts, rooms and raised roofs. At the same time, Greek elements or Victorian gingerbread were added to these modest shapes that had once been adorned only by whale bones or ship figures washed up on the beach (fig. 85).

'Sconset blossomed into a diversity of architectural forms and a faithful summer community. By 1912 the resort village contained 300 buildings, including three hotels and 250 residences, the most stately stretching along the ocean as far as a mile north to Sankaty Light. Yet, this era quickly evaporated. In 1917, railroad service was halted, its tracks sold to a scrap iron dealer. After World War I and the emergence of widespread use of the automobile, American resort life changed and 'Sconset with it. Thereafter, the obsolete large hotels and some of the deteriorating large cottages were torn down, erasing relics of another time and a style of architecture once popular on Nantucket.

Today, 'Sconset is a quiet old settlement of diverse parts, well cared for and nestled in landscaped greenery. At its center is the original fishing cluster, each structure with its own unique history revealed in the accretion of its forms. The appropriateness of new construction in 'Sconset depends on its location. At least four general site characteristics exist: (1) the original primitive cluster of fish-

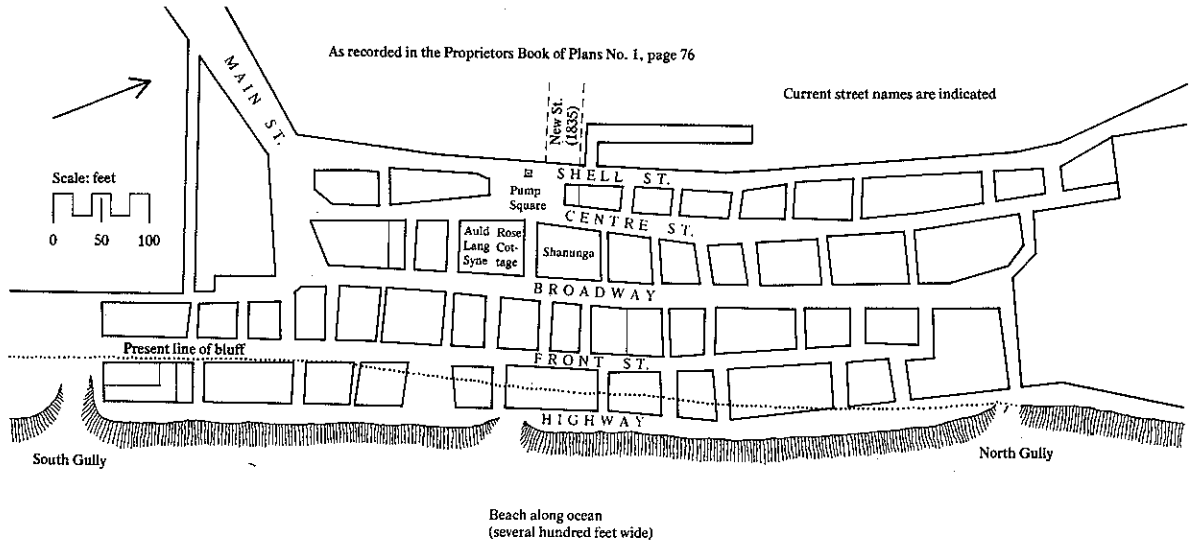


Figure 86. 1835 plan of Siasconset, the original settlement.

ing huts, (2) the large, style-conscious cottages oriented to the ocean along the two bluffs, (3) the house pattern on interior streets, especially the broad, tree-lined Main Street, which stretches westward to town, and (4) the modest improvised structures of Cod Fish Park below the bluff along the beach (fig. 86).

Intimate Scale

In the historic core of Siasconset, the key criterion of relatedness is the intimate scale of human dimension marked by the width of lanes and crosswalks, cornice heights (some lower than a human figure), size of house masses, etc. Most roofs are an accumulation of varied pitches. The edges of the lanes are clearly defined by the close rhythm of the buildings and the spaces between them. Details at this close scale are critical as are the extra niceties of rose trellises, little fences, window boxes, etc. Informality and understatement are paramount qualities. As a policy, no new construction should be allowed to obliterate or overwhelm an original historic structure. Additions to old buildings may be made in careful supplementary fashion.

Bluff Design Concerns

Along the bluffs, essential design criteria concern harmony of the edges of the larger lots along the street (hedges and building setbacks behind the hedges, perhaps with smaller accessory buildings along the street) and interval spaces or side yards between structures. The buildings are characterized by picturesque roofs and masses as well as integral voids of porches and verandahs. Harmonious fenestration proportions and roof and trim details are also important.

Village Interior

On interior streets, houses vary greatly in style and detail. They generally were not constrained by conventional tastes, which accounts for ingenious adaptations and individuality. Along Main Street, the houses represent a peculiar brand of Nantucket post-Colonial style. Small street elements such as trellises, fences, hedges, gates and lamps are prevalent. New construction should contribute to this character.

Cod Fish Park

In Cod Fish Park (fig. 87), along the beach, the once ad hoc and decrepit fishing shacks have been upgraded to summer houses of a truly vernacular and utilitarian character. New building should fit the predominant scale of these structures and reflect their simplicity and honesty of form and detail.

NOTE: All buildings within a radius

of 1 1/4 miles of the 'Sconset Post Office are considered part of the Siasconset Fire District, thereby requiring by law non-combustible roof covering.

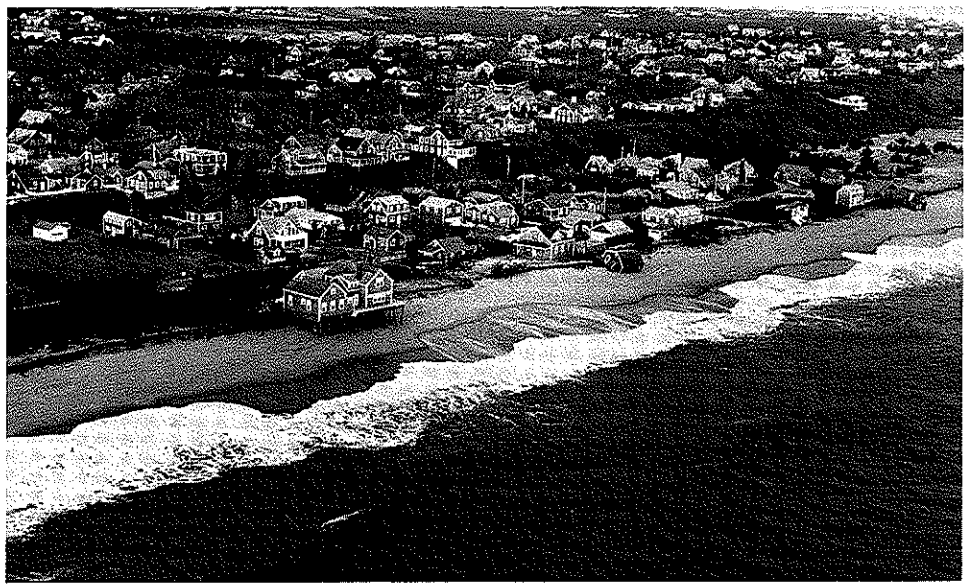


Figure 87. Aerial view of Cod Fish Park. Since this photo, the large house has been relocated and the two cottages on the beach removed. Still other houses remain threatened.

Quidnet

Quidnet, a small random cluster of about 30 cottages, originated before 1700 as a whale-sighting station at the center of the eastern shoreline of the island. It later became an active fishing hamlet. The individual character of the settlement is established by its hillside setting overlooking both the Atlantic Ocean and brackish Sesachacha Pond immediately south of it. Most buildings are oriented toward these vistas and have simple porches or yards facing the water. Spacing of buildings varies from very close to more than 50 feet apart. Their grade elevations range from 40 to 15 feet. In spite of these differences, the whole settlement is given a sense of order and cohesion by the generally rectangular alignment of the highly individualized cottages. These small-scale vernacular structures have simple trim and utilitarian details. Repetition of height, mass shape, orientation and roof pitch relate groups of buildings as do the shingles and white trim.

New construction in Quidnet or additions to its area should harmonize with these characteristics. A consensus of building orientations is important. The small scale of the structures set on grassy slopes among informal shrub plantings is appropriate to the landscape-dominated context.

Wauwinet

Situated at the head of Nantucket Harbor with the Atlantic Ocean pounding its eastern flank, Wauwinet enjoys a scenic setting on a tapered sandy wedge that leads north to Coskata and Great Point. Sand dunes line the beach and fall off gently toward the harbor. Approaching this settlement from the south, one passes through a forest of Japanese Black Pine trees planted in 1888 by Bassett Jones.

History

Since 1876, the Wauwinet House has been the central focus of Wauwinet. In the late 1800s when it was only one-story, popular sailing excursions arrived from town each day for dinner. Today it is a larger three-story hotel, restored in 1986, with attendant small cottages grouped nearby. The buildings of Wauwinet display many different design details, but within small groups of buildings there is commonly a strong resemblance. Quaint buildings have increased in size over several generations by the addition of

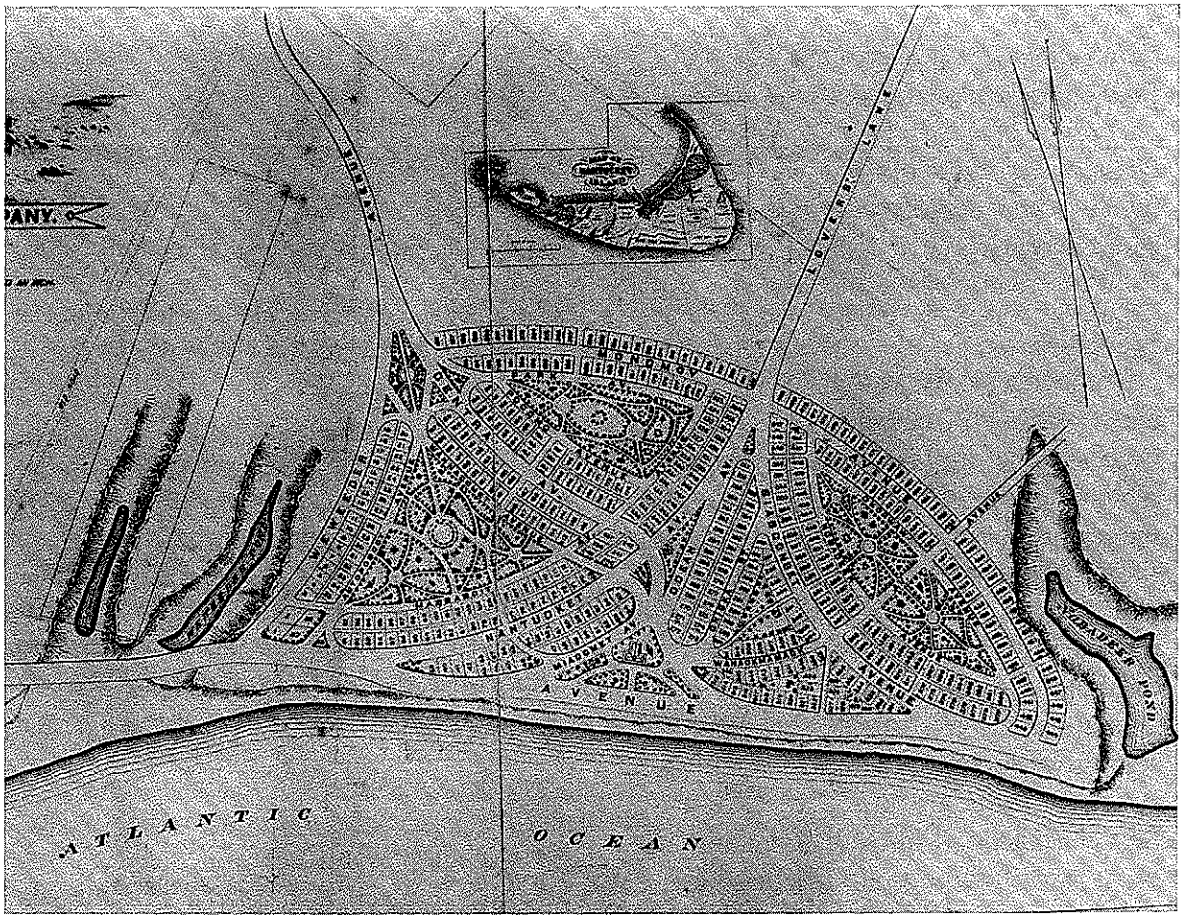


Figure 88. 1874 survey map of Surfside.

simple volumes. The similar alignment of the northernmost row of houses, the rhythm of their spacing and the similar orientations of their main gables parallel to the beach are effective design unifiers on this narrow site. The variety of color for house trim, common from earlier days, accents the shingled walls.

In this setting it is important that new buildings be constructed behind the dunes and screened from the ocean's edge. The design of new buildings should reflect their natural and informal beach setting. In addition to compatible scale among buildings, harmony of exterior elements such as porches and decks is also important.

Surfside

On the South Shore 3½ miles directly across the island from Nantucket is the cluster of more than 50 small weathered cottages known as Surfside. To the east the pattern expands into a more widely spaced development of cottages, many recently built. The setting is a windswept, flat outwash plain with very low vegetation, a strongly horizontal landscape interrupted only by low houses and a few adjacent trees.

History

Surfside was the 17th century location of a whale-sighting lookout. No settlement was there when the Surfside Land Company was created in 1873 by local speculators Henry and Charles Coffin and John Norton, although no development ensued (fig. 88). In the same year, the Life Saving Station was established, a fine specimen of a Carpenter Gothic design with a large gable roof elaborated by a cupola, dormers and a projecting front. The real impe-

tus for Surfside came in 1881 when the Nantucket Railroad, originally intended to traverse the entire South Shore, was completed from Nantucket to Surfside as the first leg of the trip to Siasconset. With this boost, an ambitious new layout for Surfside was unveiled in 1882 as a bona fide city of summer cottages, in a grid of several thousand 5,000-square foot lots. The following year, the developers bought a large hotel in Riverside, Rhode Island, dismantled it and re-erected it in Surfside to stimulate the resort business. A massive four-story block 125 feet long, with a mansard roof and wide veranda, the hotel prospered, but throughout the 1880s almost none of the hoped-for cottage construction materialized. This failure of Surfside to develop, combined with periodic storm damage of the railroad tracks along the shoreline, led in 1895 to a new train alignment inland to 'Sconset, and the Surfside venture was then abandoned. In 1899, a storm blew over the tall, deserted Surfside Hotel. From the ruins of this imported Victorian structure several island barns were constructed.

In the 20th century, the settlement of Surfside has grown modestly. A large summer house, now surrounded by pine trees, was built in the early 1900s. Later summer cottages were simpler, built low to the plain and small in scale. The Life Saving Station was closed by the U. S. Coast Guard in 1948 and eventually was reopened as a youth hostel.

Architecture

Surfside architecture is characteristically of a modest, vernacular style, with ad hoc adaptations or additions made over the years. Within the center cluster, space between buildings is close but varied. Pleasant relationships are created by similar building setbacks and rhythms, small mass shapes and informal building fenestration. These small-scale buildings were built close to the ground at an average height of 1 to $1\frac{1}{2}$ stories. Second floor rooms are generally in the garret under the roof and are opened by windows in the gable end or by small dormers. Most of the cottages are oriented to the ocean within the rectangular layout left from the 1880s.

Height Restrictions

The primary consideration for new building in Surfside is to harmonize with the low profile and modest character of the existing buildings. It is recommended that the side walls of new structures be less than two full stories in height.

Madaket

The settlement of Madaket sits at the western tip of the island, bounded by the ocean, Madaket Harbor and Long Pond (fig. 89). It includes more than 300 dwellings of different sizes, most built in the last 100 years, more than one-third in the last 25 years. The area was important in early Nantucket history as the landing place of the Indians from Martha's Vineyard and the first English settlers to Nantucket in 1659. Today the area is noted for its spectacular sunsets, prime fishing waters and a continual alteration of its shoreline. In 1961 Hurricane Esther made an island of Smith's Point by washing out the Broad Creek crossing. This opening increased in width, exposing the harbor's once protected waters to the ocean and jeopardizing valued scallop and clam populations for almost 25 years before re-closing in 1986. Within the harbor, tidal flats and wide curving beaches form a calm setting for marine recreation, and Hither Creek provides a sheltered location for boat moorings.

Madaket, like other areas of the island, was first conceived of as a settle-

Figure 89. Aerial view of Madaket.

History

ment in the resort land boom of the 1870s. In 1874, the tip of the island was subdivided into 2,000 lots in a grid pattern, but the proposed city was a fiasco. In 1891, a life saving station was erected, and it operated until 1947. In 1911, another speculator promoted the area as Madaket Terraces before sales were halted for non-deliverance of promised improvements. During the 20th century, the area grew slowly, with modest summer cottages. However, in the late 1960s a growing land market on the island brought the development of Tristram's Landing, Inc., which introduced the unprecedented construction of large condominium buildings. Since that time more than 100 houses have been added to Madaket, many of them of a character unfamiliar to the setting and the entire island.

Madaket may be considered as having three sections: (1) the main, older area, (2) the peninsula to the west beyond Hither Creek, and (3) the section between Madaket Road and Long Pond. The old part of the settlement runs from Madaket Road down to Hither Creek, a linear area developed in an old grid pattern of roads and lots. Its

Height, Scale

cottages are almost all 1- to $1\frac{1}{2}$-stories and generally are rectangularly aligned and oriented to the water. The diversity of these buildings is unified by their consistent low profile, shingled exterior and vernacular simplicity. Many are sheltered in informal enclosures of introduced Japanese Black Pines. New construction should maintain these qualities, especially the building height and scale.

The remainder of the peninsula that once ran to Smith's Point is to the west beyond Hither Creek. On this open sandy tip behind the dunes, there are

Compatibility

about 50 houses; the older majority are low modest cottages with simple

masses in a generally rectangular alignment. Some of this sense of order has been lost by recent construction in an unrelated pattern with indeterminate spaces between buildings and disparate larger and taller scale. Stark second-story sliding glass doors facing the ocean view disrupt the older character of the area. Any new structures in this area should be compatible in form, space and fenestration with adjacent buildings.

Tristram's Landing

The third section of Madaket is between Madaket Road and Long Pond and has been developed as part of Tristram's Landing, Inc., since 1967. By 1977, 49 townhouse condominiums in 11 large structures and about 50 new single-family detached units had been constructed. The first large condominium structures were built with a crude shape, massive bulk and poor proportions that lacked any identity or harmony with Nantucket architecture. Their construction was a major catalyst for extending the jurisdiction of the Historic District Commission over the entire island, and in two subsequent phases of construction the designs have been gradually modified. By 1972 the island had adopted a zoning ordinance and placed Madaket in a 20,000-square foot single-family lot residential district, preventing construction of any more multi-unit structures. The construction of single-family houses in this third area (some prior to Commission review) was characterized by the complete individuality of each structure and the exhibition of divergent and assertive stylistic features and architectural details such as overhangs, trim and fenestration. The only consistent feature is the use of shingles to cover exterior surfaces.

Chaotic Development

A major reason for the random and visually chaotic development is the isolation of each structure on its own lot, each with a different orientation but less than 200 feet apart. Because there are no intervening elements to establish any orderly relationship among them, these buildings stand in juxtaposition to one another rather than in harmony. The past development of this area can serve as an example of what may result in the absence of a common architectural form and adequate consideration of the pattern and siting of development.

Siting

A more ordered and clustered development pattern would vary the distances between buildings by pulling them into closer groupings in which they could be spatially related while leaving open prominent area nearby, such as the ridge top and other scenic views. Because of this visual disorder, new construction in this section of Madaket is not required to harmonize with the existing settlement character but should follow the general guidelines for the island (see pg.101).